

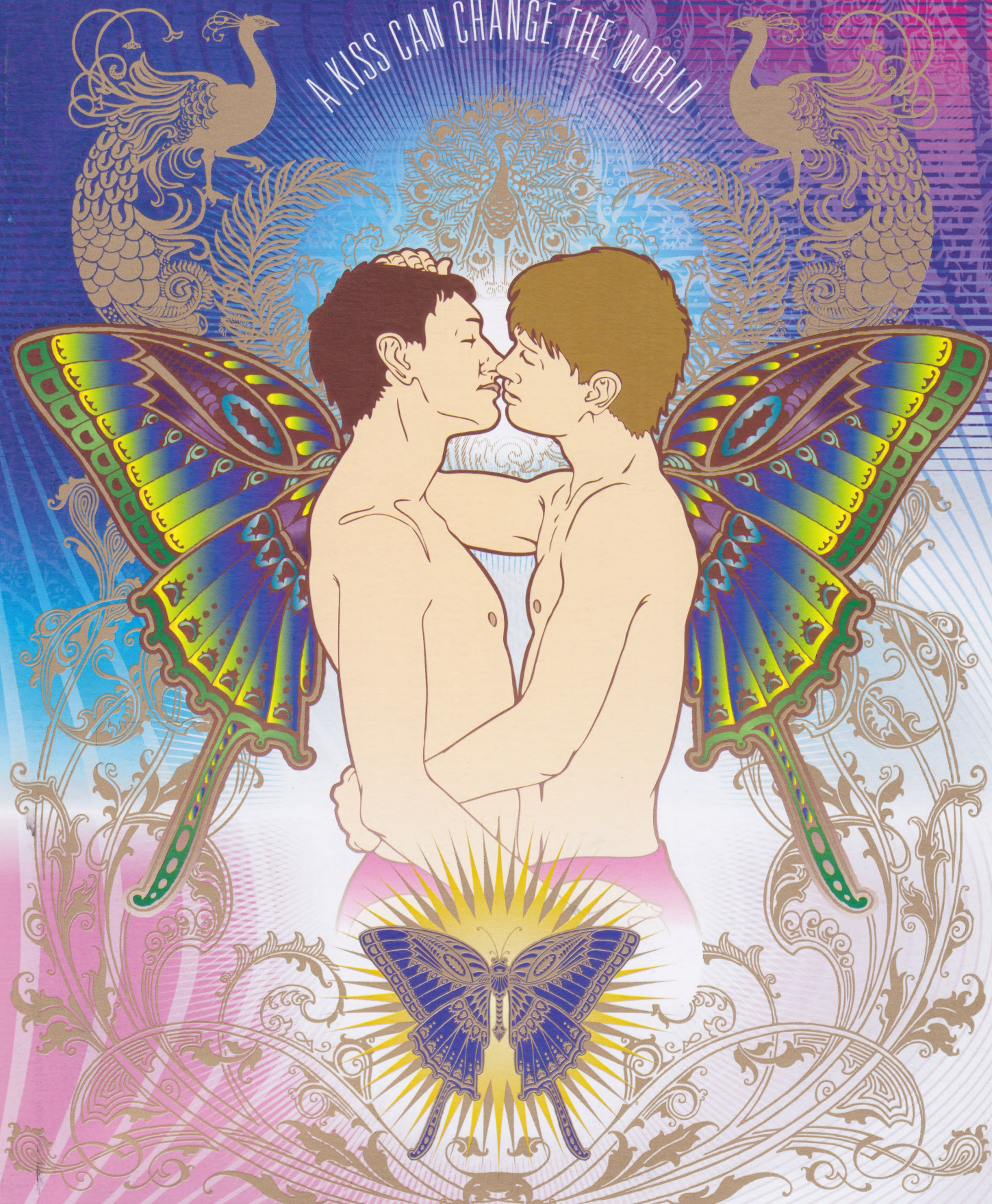


ALAN MOORE'S DODGEM LOGIC

DODGEM LOGIC #4  June / July 2010
£3.50  FOR ADULTS ONLY

A KISS CAN CHANGE THE WORLD



Great Hipsters in History



**GREAT
HIPSTERS
IN
HISTORY**



Great Hipsters in History

No. 10 : ALDOUS HUXLEY

AUTHOR ALDOUS HUXLEY, BORN TO A FAMILY OF NOTABLE BIOLOGISTS IN SURREY, 1894, BECAME A LEADING 20TH CENTURY INTELLECTUAL LIGHT. VISUALLY IMPAIRED THROUGHOUT LIFE HE TAUGHT GEORGE ORWELL FRENCH, LABOURED FOR BLOOMSBURY SOCIALITE OTTOLINE MORRELL AND BEFRIENDED ANNIE BESANT'S MESSIAH, KRISHNAMURTI. IN 1932'S *BRAVE NEW WORLD* HE PREDICTED THAT PEOPLE WOULD BE LED WILLINGLY INTO TOTALITARIANISM BY DRUGS AND ADVERTISING. ALLEGEDLY INTRODUCED TO PEYOTE BY ALEISTER CROWLEY HE LATER CO-INVENTED THE TERM 'PSYCHEDELIC' AND ADVOCATED CHANGING THE WORLD BY GIVING ITS RULING ELITE L.S.D. WHICH HE REQUESTED FROM HIS DEATHBED ON NOVEMBER 22ND, 1963, DATE OF JOHN KENNEDY'S ASSASSINATION.

Produced by the Dodgem Logic Brittle Pink Gum Company of Northampton.



**GREAT
HIPSTERS
IN
HISTORY**



Great Hipsters in History

No. 11 : TIMOTHY LEARY

BORN MASSACHUSETTS, 1920, TIMOTHY LEARY TAUGHT PSYCHOLOGY AT HARVARD BEFORE TAKING PSILOCYBIN MUSHROOMS IN MEXICO DURING 1960. SUBSEQUENTLY CHAMPIONING PSYCHEDELIC DRUGS AS A MEANS OF SOCIAL CHANGE IN HIS FAMOUS SLOGAN 'TURN ON, TUNE IN, DROP OUT'. MORE RADICAL THAN HUXLEY'S PROPOSAL OF L.S.D. FOR THE ELITE, LEARY BELIEVED EVERYONE SHOULD HAVE ACCESS TO THE EXPERIENCE. HARASSED BY AUTHORITIES INCLUDING WATERGATE BURGLAR G. GORDON LIDDY, LEARY WAS JAILED, ESCAPED, (AIDED BY THE REVOLUTIONARY WEATHERMEN AND BLACK PANTHER ELDRIDGE CLEAVER) AND IMPRISONED NEXT TO CULT KILLER CHARLES MANSON AFTER RECAPTURE. DYING IN 1996, HIS LAST WORDS WERE 'WHY NOT?'

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**GREAT
HIPSTERS
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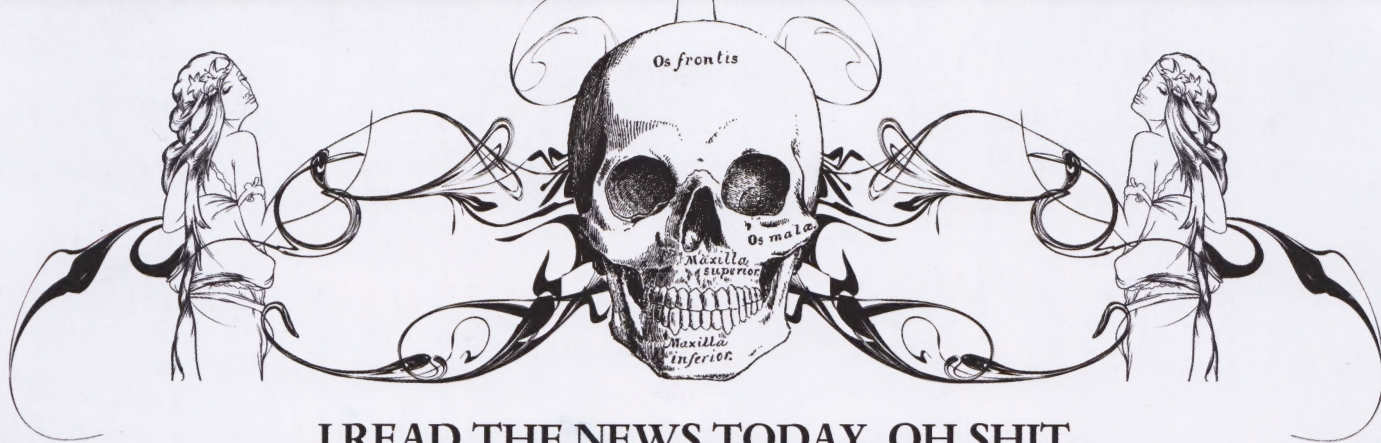


Great Hipsters in History

No. 12 : KEN KESEY

A BULL-NECKED HIGH SCHOOL WRESTLING CHAMP, KESEY WAS BORN IN COLORADO, 1935. IN 1959, WHILE STUDYING CREATIVE WRITING KESEY VOLUNTEERED TO TEST L.S.D. FOR THE CIA'S SINISTER MKULTRA PROJECT. THIS EXPERIENCE INFLUENCED HIS 1962 NOVEL, *ONE FLEW OVER THE CUCKOO'S NEST* AND COMMENCED A LIFELONG INTEREST IN PSYCHEDELICS. IN 1964, WITH JACK KEROUAC'S FORMER DRIVER NEAL CASSADY AND OTHER 'MERRY PRANKSTERS' INCLUDING PAUL KRASSNER, HE TOOK AN ACID-SATURATED CROSS-COUNTRY TRIP IN A CONVERTED SCHOOL BUS CALLED 'FURTHUR'. CELEBRATED IN TOM WOLFE'S *ELECTRIC KOOL-AID ACID TEST* (A 'HAPPENING' WHICH SPAWNED THE GRATEFUL DEAD). A CONSUMMATE WRITER AND ADVENTURER, HE DIED IN NOVEMBER, 2001.

Produced by the Dodgem Logic Brittle Pink Gum Company of Northampton.



I READ THE NEWS TODAY, OH SHIT...

Picture yourself in a boat on a river, only it's not a river so much as a riptide of burning mermaid tears that won't stop screaming, and it isn't really a boat, it's actually a whale-vulva made out of diamonds. And by 'picture yourself' I mean 'picture a kind of schizophrenic jukebox that's either playing all the records backwards or is somehow spraying them across the room like hurtling black vinyl coasters of sizzling death.' Welcome to the psychedelic summer spectacular fourth issue of *Dodgem Logic*. We'd love to turn you on.

Given that this is the festival season, there's a good chance that at least one of you is reading these words while in a chemically altered state. Yeah, that's right. I'm talking about you, saucer-pupils, and don't just try closing the magazine and walking away. I'm still going to be here when you get back. Besides, I just wanted to reassure you that you're in safe hands with us. Nobody here is going to try and freak you out or play games-mind with you, although isn't it amazing that can still you undersent this standence? Beleep me, we've got your best hearts at interest. Just try not to get paranoid or self-conscious and remember that no-one else can tell that you're tripping. Except me, obviously. And the person on your left. They know as well. You can tell by how they're pretending not to pay you any attention. Oh, sure, you *think* you know them, but who are they really? And while they don't seem to be plotting against you, isn't that the very nature of a plot? I mean, when you think about it, how much of reality can you actually trust? What if, like, you were the only real person in the world and the rest of it, including this editorial, was just some sort of evil computer simulation like in *The Matrix*? Or...oh my God, I only just thought...what about, that time when if things had gone another way you could have easily ended up dead, what if things *did* go another way? What if we're all dead, even M. Night Shyamalan, and this is all some kind of sickly purgatorial half-world? Jesus, that would explain so much. Or, even worse, what if our entire universe was just a single atom in the feeler-hairs of an inconceivably vast praying mantis wearing a garish pink clown costume, and what if that ridiculous colossal insect were in fact the entity that we humans know as God? What then, eh? WHAT THEN??

No, I'm only kidding. In this mind-expanding issue, for your edification and delight, we have Dick "Foreman Dick" Foreman with an illuminating stumble through the hinterlands of psychedelic culture, we have the physically beautiful intellectual giant that I am privileged to know as 'me' delivering a dissertation on America's affair with Science Fiction, and we have not only the conclusion of Melinda Gebbie's drift through San Francisco's dreamtime but also the first ever gallery exhibition of her gorgeous, eye-melting new paintings. There's the final part of Gary Mills' revealing romp around the septic underbelly of town planning, there's Debbie Delano with a diatribe on the delights of being the country's only openly gay teacher (or at least as far as we're aware), and there's Steve Moore's stern admonishment to Make Sense, Not War. Reason's ruffian Robin Ince slaps common sense into our credulous drug-addled minds like some kind of ruthlessly rational Release Tent, while Steve Aylett unleashes a torrent of grimacing swine to exactly the opposite effect. Then, for the benefit of Mr. Kite, we've got Kevin O'Neill and Savage Pencil plus our full complement of spinning doctors, guerrilla gardeners, subversive stitchers, historical hipsters, local lurchers and revolutionary recipes, all topped off by a sexy and scintillating free poster-guide to the scented bowers of Bohemia and swaddled in a breathtaking wraparound cover by flowered-up fabulist and mind-bending maestro John Coulthart. Don't ever say that we harshed on your buzz.

Meanwhile, you'll notice that our prediction last issue of being partially undressed and governed by some kind of clearly non-functional apparatus right around now has come chillingly true. When? When will you listen? Okay, be back here in August for when we sell out and go all slick and glossy for a star-studded photo-feature on the glamour-gods and goddesses of Spring Boroughs, where nothing is real and there's nothing to get hung about. Paved-over fields forever.

Alan Moore ~ Duke of Earl and King of the Wild Frontier.

DODGEM LOGIC: WE NAME THE GUILTY PARTIES!

Alan Moore ~ An enigma, inside a puzzle, inside a T-shirt riddled with bum-holes. Tony 'Knockabout' Bennett ~ Co-publisher and Sin-eater.

Queen Calluz ~ Boss of editing and chief human-wrangler. Downtown Joe Brown ~ Demi-boss of editing and hammer of God.

Gavin and Alix Wallace ~ Designing our lives and colouring our expectations.

Claire Ashby ~ Green shoots of recovery and heavy lifting. She got engaged to Charlie! Down by the wish-tree in Foot Meadow! Awwwww! Awwwwwww! I'm filling up...

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FREE THIS ISSUE: A2 Psychedelic poster by Alan Moore and Downtown Joe Brown

MORE Terrifying!

MORE Destructive!

FRANKENSTEIN'S CADILLAC



A weirdo minority interest of the '30s and '40s, it has come to dominate the greater part of our contemporary pop culture and, more worryingly, our concepts of the future and our ideologies.

Alan Moore examines our peculiar relationship with science fiction.

As a species we've been a delirious and lurid bunch of fantasists since our inception, which the briefest glance at classical mythology or ancient tribal legends will confirm. It seems to be a basic human impulse to imagine beings, possibilities and situations that exist beyond the limits of what is achievable in ordinary reality, a primitive compulsion to conceive of things which never happen that persists long after we've become more rational and civilised. The Roman writer Lucian tells how his ship was carried to the moon by an unusually vigorous waterspout in his misleadingly entitled *A True History*. With its patently ridiculous method of lunar transportation we would class this story as a fantasy, whereas Jules Verne's patently ridiculous idea of getting people to the moon by shooting them out of a massive cannon we would dignify with the term science fiction. Clearly, when it comes to precise definitions, it's a subject that at best has highly suspect and elusive boundaries.

For example, Francis Godwin's stirring tale of visiting the moon in a contraption pulled by geese, apparently a kind of literary fanny-magnet with which to beguile the eager and impressionable ladies of 17th century Northampton, would be classified as fantasy. So would Roundhead visionary and Puritan jailbird John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, issuing from nearby Bedford only a few decades after Godwin's heyday, with its journey through strange lands and meetings with their allegorical inhabitants providing a strong plot-foundation for fantasy trilogies up to the present day.

Bunyan's intentions were religious and political: his work looked forward to a future after either Cromwell or a biblical apocalypse had wiped away the world's ungodly institutions and regimes and raised an equal-opportunity Jerusalem instead. A fiery masterpiece that has today an unfair reputation as a dreary exercise in Sunday School morality, this was the book that many of the puritans migrating to America took with them as almost a second Bible and which would exert an influence on the developing American imagination to which we will be returning later. Even so, it hardly qualifies as science fiction, having issued from a period and culture with a negligible grasp of science.

Not until the early 19th century with its huge advances in both science and engineering do we find anything that resembles science fiction as most people would define the term today, and even then the work appears to have its origins in ghost stories, Romantic poetry and radical politics. In the late 18th century, London was graced with an illustrious bunch of political and literary hotheads that included the pugnacious and angelic William Blake and Norfolk insurrectionary Thomas Paine, whose *Rights of Man* would shortly spark off a great deal of fuss in both France and America. In the same circle we find Mary Wollstonecraft, who'd answered Paine's book with her own groundbreaking *Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, alongside the proto-anarchist and author of *Political Justice*, William Godwin.





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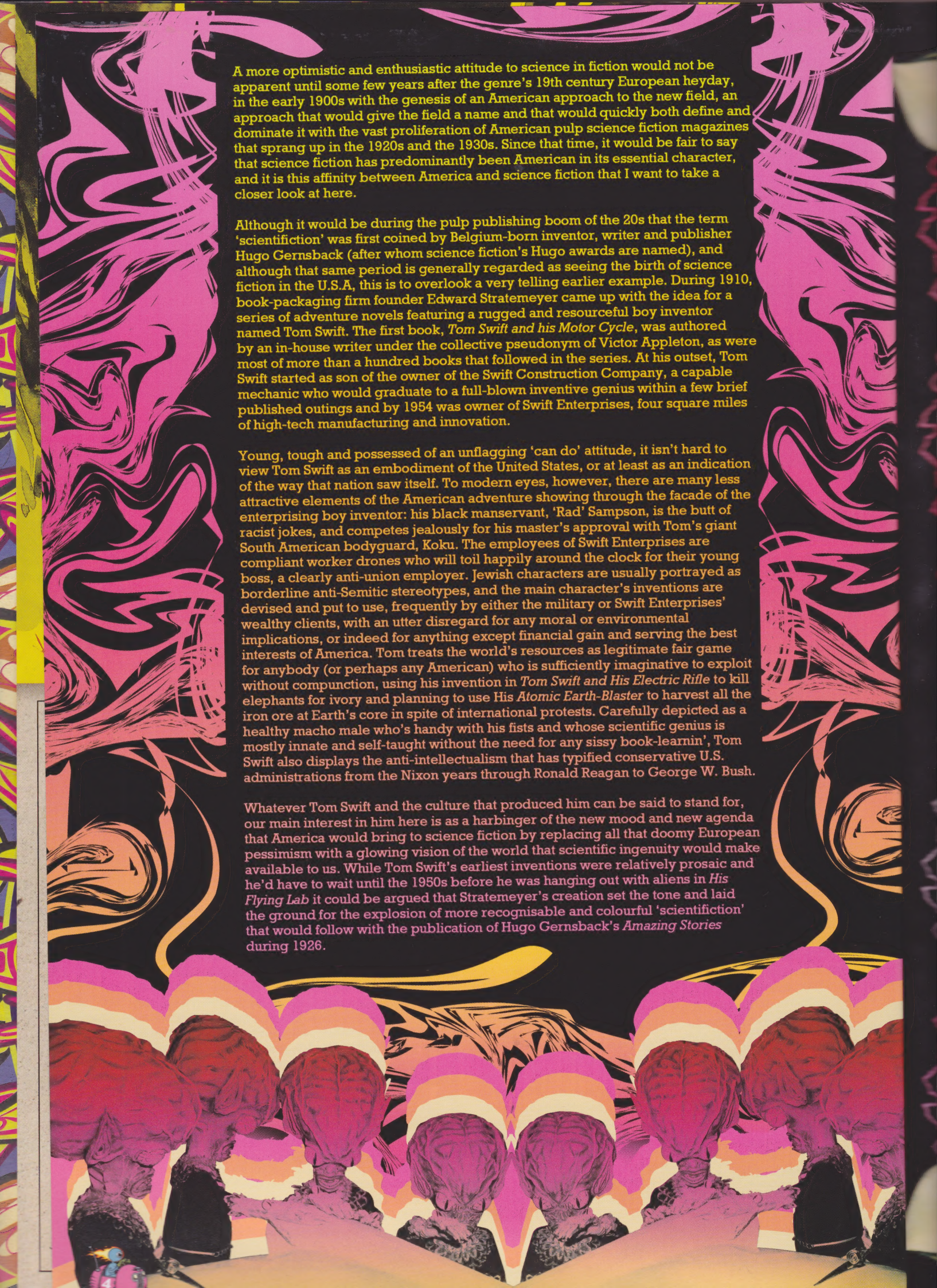
This last duo married in 1797, but within a year Mary had died just twelve days after childbirth leaving Godwin with a baby girl, also named Mary, to bring up alone. At the age of sixteen, Mary eloped with the flamboyant twenty-two year-old (and married) poet, Percy Shelley, whose wife Harriet would shortly drown herself and be found floating in the Serpentine. The lovers went abroad, and in 1814 Mary bore Shelley's child, a daughter who was dead within a fortnight. The bereaved young parents, who were not yet wed, consoled themselves by going on a memorable holiday in Switzerland with Shelley's friend and fellow poet Lord Byron and Mary's half-sister Claire. To pass the time they famously devised a competition, trying to outdo each other in the composition of frightening stories. Perhaps drawing on her own past tragedies, as well as her anxieties concerning the industrial and scientific future that was then erupting all around her, the soon-to-be Mary Shelley came up with the narrative of *Frankenstein* and at a stroke invented science fiction.

Unlike Francis Godwin's goose-drawn whimsy or John Bunyan's fierce religious allegory, this was fiction that acknowledged science and based itself upon conjectures about where the path of scientific progress might be leading us, for better or for worse. In *Frankenstein*, with the Electric Age embodied as a raging monster bent upon destroying its creator, that would clearly be 'for worse', and this fearful and pessimistic view of science and its possibilities is to be found in almost all the early works of as-yet-unnamed science fiction that would follow Mary Shelley's novel in the later decades of the 19th century. Even Jules Verne masks his clear boyish enthusiasm for the wondrous underwater vessels and giant aircraft of his fictions by sternly reminding us that such things might well fall into the hands of techno-pirates and deranged fanatics, characters that one suspects Verne secretly admired.

H.G. Wells appears to have an even bleaker view of things, one unalleviated by Verne's fondness for swashbuckling adventure, seeming to suggest that our investigation into science in itself might open up a box of nightmares without any need for intervention by a megalomaniac like Verne's Robur or Captain Nemo.

The protagonist of Wells' *Invisible Man*, Griffin, starts out as a seemingly well-balanced and emotionally normal individual with an admirable sense of scientific curiosity. It's only his discovery of invisibility that turns him slowly and, it seems, inevitably to a homicidal maniac. In *The Time Machine*, instead of using the idea of travelling through time to serve up a utopia, an affirmation that society would benefit from scientific progress, the socialist Wells instead delivers an appalling vision of a world in which the underclass, the downstairs-servant strata of society to which Wells had been born, has over centuries degenerated into monstrous subterranean cannibals, the Morlocks, who predate upon the childlike and aristocratic Eloi. Privileged but also helpless and enfeebled, these resembled more the class of people who frequented the well-mannered garden parties that Wells was increasingly fond of attending as a literary celebrity. After this wretched glimpse of what's in store for civilised humanity, the book concludes with an even more dismal vista of the further future where the highest form of life is a football-like creature flopping helpless in the ebb-tide of a dying planet. In *War of the Worlds*, meanwhile, Wells asks the reader to consider that for all of our advances in technology, there may well be other life-forms out there even more advanced than we are, and with just as bad a record for maltreating or even annihilating any less-sophisticated native people that they happen to encounter. Told entirely from the viewpoint of an ordinary man who's suddenly caught up in the mass panic of an alien invasion, the book is a cornerstone of the peculiarly English approach to apocalypse that's exemplified by later writers like John Wyndham, in whose grim *Day of the Triffids* the main horrors are not the aggressive mobile plant-things of the title but instead are those afforded by a terrified and struck-blind population. In its earliest incarnation, then, science fiction uses its inventive range of new ideas to cast doubt on the proposition that all scientific change is necessarily progressing to a brighter, better destination. The first writers in the genre, rather than promoting science, seem to be more concerned about its various potential dangers.






A more optimistic and enthusiastic attitude to science in fiction would not be apparent until some few years after the genre's 19th century European heyday, in the early 1900s with the genesis of an American approach to the new field, an approach that would give the field a name and that would quickly both define and dominate it with the vast proliferation of American pulp science fiction magazines that sprang up in the 1920s and the 1930s. Since that time, it would be fair to say that science fiction has predominantly been American in its essential character, and it is this affinity between America and science fiction that I want to take a closer look at here.

Although it would be during the pulp publishing boom of the 20s that the term 'scientifiction' was first coined by Belgium-born inventor, writer and publisher Hugo Gernsback (after whom science fiction's Hugo awards are named), and although that same period is generally regarded as seeing the birth of science fiction in the U.S.A, this is to overlook a very telling earlier example. During 1910, book-packaging firm founder Edward Stratemeyer came up with the idea for a series of adventure novels featuring a rugged and resourceful boy inventor named Tom Swift. The first book, *Tom Swift and his Motor Cycle*, was authored by an in-house writer under the collective pseudonym of Victor Appleton, as were most of more than a hundred books that followed in the series. At his outset, Tom Swift started as son of the owner of the Swift Construction Company, a capable mechanic who would graduate to a full-blown inventive genius within a few brief published outings and by 1954 was owner of Swift Enterprises, four square miles of high-tech manufacturing and innovation.

Young, tough and possessed of an unflagging 'can do' attitude, it isn't hard to view Tom Swift as an embodiment of the United States, or at least as an indication of the way that nation saw itself. To modern eyes, however, there are many less attractive elements of the American adventure showing through the facade of the enterprising boy inventor: his black manservant, 'Rad' Sampson, is the butt of racist jokes, and competes jealously for his master's approval with Tom's giant South American bodyguard, Koku. The employees of Swift Enterprises are compliant worker drones who will toil happily around the clock for their young boss, a clearly anti-union employer. Jewish characters are usually portrayed as borderline anti-Semitic stereotypes, and the main character's inventions are devised and put to use, frequently by either the military or Swift Enterprises' wealthy clients, with an utter disregard for any moral or environmental implications, or indeed for anything except financial gain and serving the best interests of America. Tom treats the world's resources as legitimate fair game for anybody (or perhaps any American) who is sufficiently imaginative to exploit without compunction, using his invention in *Tom Swift and His Electric Rifle* to kill elephants for ivory and planning to use His *Atomic Earth-Blaster* to harvest all the iron ore at Earth's core in spite of international protests. Carefully depicted as a healthy macho male who's handy with his fists and whose scientific genius is mostly innate and self-taught without the need for any sissy book-learnin', Tom Swift also displays the anti-intellectualism that has typified conservative U.S. administrations from the Nixon years through Ronald Reagan to George W. Bush.

Whatever Tom Swift and the culture that produced him can be said to stand for, our main interest in him here is as a harbinger of the new mood and new agenda that America would bring to science fiction by replacing all that doomy European pessimism with a glowing vision of the world that scientific ingenuity would make available to us. While Tom Swift's earliest inventions were relatively prosaic and he'd have to wait until the 1950s before he was hanging out with aliens in *His Flying Lab* it could be argued that Stratemeyer's creation set the tone and laid the ground for the explosion of more recognisable and colourful 'scientifiction' that would follow with the publication of Hugo Gernsback's *Amazing Stories* during 1926.



Gernsback's enduring faith in an efficient and comfortable future built upon extrapolated U.S. knowhow is apparent from his first attempted story in the fledgling genre, *Ralph 124C41+*, published in Gernsback's *Modern Electrics* in 1911, a now-stock depiction of a future citizen of the food-pills and flying car variety. The character's serial-number surname is a phonetic rendering of 'one to foresee for one more' that doesn't really work or make sense but which pretty much invents text messaging.

There are none of *The Time Machine's* social forebodings in Gernsback's imagining of life centuries hence. The emphasis has changed, with the fiction's scientific element and novel hardware now fetishised to become the main point of the narrative, no longer merely a device allowing H.G. Wells or Mary Shelley to explore ideas that had been previously inaccessible. The authors who immediately followed Gernsback, having now a rapidly expanding market for their work in the pulp science fiction magazines that would spring up after *Amazing Stories*, mostly stuck to Gernsback's template vision of a future in which science had rolled back the boundaries of the impossible. E.E. 'Doc' Smith, creator of the 'Lensman' series of space-operas, had written the first volume in his saga somewhere between 1915 and 1920, but would wait for 1927 and *Amazing Stories* (its first issue had been filled with classic reprints of Verne, Wells and Poe for want of any new, original material) before he had a publisher to sell it to. Abraham Merritt, later best-known as an author of exotic fantasy, made his science fiction debut in *Amazing* that same year, while 1928 would witness Philip Francis Nowlan's *Armageddon* 2419, the first outing for Nowlan's future-adventurer Buck Rogers.

Bankrupted in 1929, Gernsback sold off *Amazing Stories* but was back in business later the same year as publisher of *Science Wonder Stories* and *Air Wonder Stories*. These had merged by 1930 into just plain *Wonder Stories*, which would feature Stanley Weinbaum's *Martian Odyssey* and the two-fisted rocket and ray-blaster romps of Edmond Hamilton. It was also in 1930 that editor Harry Bates' *Astounding Stories* first saw light of day, showcasing the space-operatic works of Murray Leinster and Jack Williamson and garnering a reputation for transplanting cowboy plotlines into outer space by substituting rockets for stage-coaches and hostile Neptunians for Cherokee. This reputation would endure until John W. Campbell took over *Astounding* during 1938 and insisted on a more realistic scientific basis for its stories, even though these would essentially still be space operas. Space opera, usually set in a future period where a souped-up America extends its benign influence across the solar system, would be the prevailing mode for stateside science fiction until the late 1940s, when a new and perhaps less complacent generation of creators such as Philip Dick were starting to appear in print. For more than twenty years, then, the American science fiction field was dominated by the swooping rocket-pack heroics of Nowlan's Buck Rogers or Smith's Lensmen, rugged pioneers adventuring across a starry frontier without limits, unrestrained by either ethical considerations or the laws of physics. The enthusiasm with which the United States embraced the genre brings me to my central question: is science fiction what the U.S. has instead of history?

Most nations when required to stave up national identity, perhaps in times of difficulty, will call on reserves of national history or mythology. In Britain, for example, leaders will routinely summon up the spirit of the Blitz, of Winston Churchill or King Arthur when attempting to persuade the country to accept something it isn't going to like, like public spending cutbacks or a costly foreign conflict. In effect, what most nations are trying to communicate is 'Look at what we were.' America, conversely, is only a little over two hundred years old and its brief history is largely one of genocide and slavery, things that most usually require a veil drawn over them rather than celebration. Lacking myth or folklore and without a reservoir of history to plunder, is America instead employing its projected science fiction futures to say 'Look at what we will be'?

After all, it is a nation founded more upon projections, dreams and hopes of a quite literal 'New World' than most, begun by refugees fleeing the English Civil War like the Northampton families of both Benjamin Franklin and George Washington; by puritans inspired by Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* to seek out a New Jerusalem where their most fervent prayers would all be realised. Future-fixated from the outset, the new country's visions of a Promised Land in store for everybody were initially religious and had God as a root cause of all their marvels. By the late 19th and early 20th centuries, however, it was starting to become apparent that America's best chance of moving forward lay in science and industry rather than divine intervention. In the nation's fantasies God was to some degree replaced as the sole source of miracles and wonder by the atom-smasher, and conversely there would come to be something of the religious and the millenarian in science fiction's attitude to science. This tension between a god-struck puritan past and longings for a Hugo Gernsback technological utopia would seem to be apparent in America today, when the most scientifically precocious nation on the planet has Creationism on the school science syllabus in Kansas.

Arguably, a culmination of America's relationship with science fiction and biblical Armageddon came in 1945 when what used to be known as 'atom bombs' were dropped upon Hiroshima and Nagasaki, causing horrifying devastation that made the divine wrath rained on Sodom and Gomorrah look comparatively lenient. That atom bombs were science fiction hardware which had manifested in real life is demonstrated by the fact that John W. Campbell, having published a fantastical description of a weapon powered by nuclear fission in his rigorously science-based *Astounding Science Fiction* just before the bombing of Hiroshima, found himself isolated and interrogated by a very nervous F.B.I. Ironically, the mushroom-cloud dawn of the nuclear age that had fulfilled so many of science fiction's gung-ho dreams would also be what, at least for a couple of decades, weakened space opera's domination of the field and seemed to usher in a wave of new dissenting voices, such as Philip K. Dick's 1949 debut in the endearing anti-gravity-with-cheesecake pulp mag *Planet Stories*. It's also in the late 1940s that we start to see home-grown responses from various different countries to the obviously popular American pulp science fiction boom, with John E. 'Ted' Carnell's *New Worlds* from the U.K in 1946, later a home for radical young writers such as J.G. Ballard and the estimable Michael Moorcock, being one of the foremost and earliest examples. Even though this international S.F. field would come to be massively important in terms of its artistry and its ideas, however, at the outset it was only a reaction to the more commercially successful U.S. market. Tom Swift was still being published and the genre was still very much a U.S.-led affair.

The American science fiction landscape of the 1950s, though, was a more ill-at-ease and shadowy terrain than what had come before, perhaps because of all the doubts engendered partly by the flattening of two Japanese cities just a few years previously; partly by the mounting paranoia that resulted from Senator Joe McCarthy's anti-communist witch-hunts and inquisitions. This new mood would be most noticeable in the period's movies, comic books and television shows, with S.F. literature itself seeming reluctant to give up its interstellar romances and turn its gaze on issues and events closer to home. With that said, even the space opera of the 1950s would become more sociological in its approach, concerned more with imagined alien cultures than the rockets which enable us to visit them, and therefore able to reflect and parody earthly society by crafting stories about strange civilisations out among the nebulae. Additionally, the decade witnessed the emergence of fresh talent, bent upon stretching the definition of what science fiction was or could be.

1950, for example, saw the publication of Ray Bradbury's *The Martian Chronicles*, jewel-like fables which attempted to make science fiction into something as affecting and haunting as poetry. The next year Phillip José Farmer's tale *The Lovers*, with its interplanetary explorer lured into a physical relationship by a mate-mimicking extraterrestrial plant, would be the first offering in the genre to take sex completely seriously and was thus highly controversial. 1952 saw Alfred Bester's *The Demolished Man* take the traditional space opera into new stylistic areas, experimenting with the form in a way that prefigured the new wave science fiction of some fifteen years thereafter, while in 1953 Ray Bradbury returned with *Fahrenheit 451* (allegedly the temperature at which book pages will ignite), the narrative account of a book-burning future that would introduce the concept of dystopian science fiction, long familiar in the European field, to the traditionally optimistic U.S. market. During 1954 Leigh Brackett's book *The Long Tomorrow* took this trend considerably further with what may well be the first post-nuclear S.F. novel. Alfred Bester's *Tiger, Tiger*, (a.k.a. *The Stars My Destination*) would appear a couple of years later, making further progress in Bester's experiments with form and detailing the startling legend of the 'jaunted' spaceman Gully Foyle.

James Blish's ostensibly more conventional *A Case of Conscience*, which considered the religious questions raised by interplanetary journeying such as 'Do aliens have souls?', arrived in 1958 and the decade was brought to a magnificent conclusion the next year with Walter M. Miller's *A Canticle for Leibowitz*. This wonderfully compelling piece of work combines the dual American preoccupations of a zealously religious past and an uncertain science-based future in its stark depiction of a post-apocalyptic wilderness where isolated colonies of Catholic monks work patiently upon illuminated manuscripts of decorated scientific formulae and circuit diagrams, without the faintest comprehension of what such pre-breakdown relics might have once been or might once have meant.

Outside of literature, the other media in which science fiction manifested were even more gloomy and unsettling in their concerns. William M. Gaines' terrific E.C. Comics line would feature gorgeous adaptations of Ray Bradbury alongside memorable twist-ending S.F. stories that would sometimes deal with issues such as racism or nuclear holocaust, while on T.V. Rod Serling's mesmerising *Twilight Zone* would take a similar approach to a broad spectrum of America's subconscious longings and anxieties. Possibly the most candid glimpse of the American mass mind, however, is afforded by the S.F. movies of the era, mostly exercises in unmitigated paranoia. The original Don Siegel version of *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, made in 1956, seems to be serving up a metaphor for the insidious spread of communism as it was perceived in that McCarthyite decade: just like the movie's 'pod people', your neighbour down the street might have become a communist and yet would look the same. Alternatively, given that the most offensive thing the pod people are seen to do is to allow their neighbourhoods to go to hell, with potholes in the road and uncollected garbage, it may be they also represent a generalised antipathy to immigrants of any sort, be they poor whites, blacks or Hispanics, on the Daily Mail grounds that this might affect property prices.



With director Robert Wise's *Day the Earth Stood Still* in 1951, conversely, we have the suggestion that space visitors might well be more evolved and more compassionate than we are, with any encounter liable to reveal humanity itself as the real monsters. Far less thoughtful or well-made but more unwittingly revealing is director Bert I. Gordon's *Amazing Colossal Man* in 1957, during which a man exposed to nuclear radiation grows to such a monstrous size that he can only wear what seems to be a giant nappy. Being bald, this gives him the appearance of a hundred-foot-tall baby who seems unable to grasp why suddenly nobody wants to be his friend or even get too near him. Wounded by this wholly understandable rejection, the enormous radioactive toddler throws a tantrum and goes on a rampage in his diapers. It's not difficult to see a parallel with the U.S., a country which in terms of history was in its infancy when it acquired the atom bomb and suddenly became the biggest and most powerful nation on the planet, not to mention the most feared. If Gordon's movie can be seen as a delayed American reaction to the nuking of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, it is interesting to consider Japanese director Inoshiro Honda's first *Godzilla* offering from Toho Studios in 1954 in the same light, as unintended metaphor for Japan's own relationship with nuclear power. The earliest films in the series unambiguously show their saurian protagonist as an embodiment of the destructive power inherent in atomic energy, a thing that breathes radioactive firestorms and can trample entire cities. In the later films, however, made after Japan had modified its attitude regarding nuclear energy, *Godzilla* is now friendly, capable of speech and lives with other amiable monsters out on Monster Island, ready to protect his homeland if it should be threatened by external forces. Science fiction, always something of a magic looking glass in which we conjure visions of idealised futures, would seem in the 1950s to have been reflecting darker and more troubling possibilities, or at least partly so.

The optimistic space-operatic version of America's bright future was still prevalent throughout the period, though, as exemplified by the genre's effect upon design during the 1950s. Even though the Space Age would not start officially until the next decade, American design was pretty obviously aspiring to the stars throughout the 'fifties, with the sweeping tail-fins of that era's emblematic automobiles clearly borrowed from the rockets of Buck Rogers and Flash Gordon; from the fictions and predictions of two decades previously. America was trying to project itself into the future state that Hugo Gernsback and Tom Swift had promised it, but when the Space Age finally arrived it was much stranger and much more unnerving than the one depicted by the cover artists of *Amazing* or *Astounding*. During 1957 Soviet Russia was successful in its launch of Sputnik I, the world's first artificial satellite. Beaten to a frontier which they'd imagined was their own, and by the very enemies that Senator McCarthy's rants had so successfully made demons of, Americans were both alarmed and to a certain degree traumatised by the idea of communists in space. Granted, America's Explorer I was launched the following year, but by the time the 1960s finally arrived, with Russian cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin's first manned spaceflight during 1961, the world of the American imagination and thus of the nation's science fiction was a more uncertain and peculiar place.

Perhaps the first sign something was amiss came, also during 1961, with Robert Heinlein's *Stranger in a Strange Land*. Heinlein's work had always seemed more to the right politically than most of his contemporaries, with the unapologetically imperialistic *Starship Troopers* made more recently into a film by Paul Verhoeven that plays Heinlein's borderline fascism straight, to great satirical effect. With the wildly out-of-character *Stranger in a Strange Land*, however, Heinlein serves up a bizarre and fascinating proto-hippy document, heavily influenced by Heinlein's then-association with the brilliant rocket scientist, magician, science fiction fan and Crowley acolyte Jack Whiteside Parsons, along with their mutual acquaintance, S.F. writer and founder of Scientology, one Lafayette Ron Hubbard. With its messianic Martian-born protagonist espousing free love and forming a cult consisting mostly of young women, with its mystical ideas foreshadowing those of the counter-culture that would follow five or six years later, it's perhaps hardly surprising that the book would prove to be a source of inspiration for Charles Manson, guiding light behind the Tate-La Bianca murders, who would name one of his children after Heinlein's central character, Valentine Michael Smith.

In 1962 two very different and yet equally unsettling science fiction voices would be heard from England: J.G. Ballard, who had cut his teeth on a run of superb short stories for Ted Carnell's *New Worlds* magazine, released *The Drowned World*. Eerie and evocative, concerned more with the new and aberrant psychologies that altered landscapes might produce, it was the first of Ballard's many marvellous apocalypses, with the planet flooded, dried up, or with plants, people and animals infected by a spreading crust of jewellery, as in *The Crystal World*. Meanwhile, Anthony Burgess would bring out *A Clockwork Orange*, with its sociopathic and style-conscious anti-hero Alex talking a variety of slang called 'Nadsat' (actually corrupted Russian) as he and his pals (or 'droogs') kill, rape and brutalise their way through an unravelling future Britain. This was very different fare from even the most pessimistic U.S. offerings, and yet such sensibilities would prove extremely influential on the new wave of American science fiction writers during the decade to come.



In 1964, also in England, Ted Carnell stepped down as editor of *New Worlds* and appointed Michael Moorcock to be his successor. Radical in both his politics and his approach to writing, Moorcock saw science fiction as a vehicle for modernist experimental fiction and, under his editorship, would transform *New Worlds* into the most exciting and progressive S.F. magazine that there has ever been, at least in my opinion. Authors as diverse as Ballard, Moorcock, M. John Harrison, Barrington Bayley, Michael Butterworth, John Sladek, Carol Emshwiller and the remarkable Jack Trevor Story would push the boundaries of the genre with work that was often barely recognisable as science fiction. In the process they would redefine S.F. as something which, in J.G. Ballard's view, was the last genre capable of adequately representing present-day reality. This came to be almost the motto of what would be, sometimes scathingly, referred to as the new wave. In America, the excellent anthologist and writer Judith Merril was expanding the U.S. conception of the field with her eclectic *Year's Best* collections, wilfully including pieces by the great experimental cut-up junkie queer Beat Generation writer William Burroughs, or by founding member of The Fugs and poet Tuli Kupferberg. In 1966 Philip K. Dick, bending reality for years with books like 1962's what-if-the-axis-powers-had-won-the-war tale *Man in the High Castle*, released *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*, a novel which would later be adapted, loosely, as the film *Blade Runner*. In the same year Michael Moorcock turned heads with *Behold the Man*, the still-shocking account of a time traveller returning to 1st century Galilee to find how much is true, which at the time was seen by some reviewers as an act of blasphemy. In 1967, the incendiary and pioneering U.S. writer Harlan Ellison (author of such short stories as *I Have No Mouth and I Must Scream*; *Repent, Harlequin, Said the Tick-Tock Man* and *Shattered like a Glass Goblin*, tales where even the titles alone are unforgettable) compiled his seminal and groundbreaking anthology of new wave writings, *Dangerous Visions*, showcasing new pieces by exemplary U.S. science fiction authors like Fritz Lieber or the luminously brilliant Samuel R. Delaney. A year later the prolific Michael Moorcock ushered in his shifting and ambiguous Pierrot of the apocalypse, Jerry Cornelius, with *The Final Programme*. Clearly, in the psychedelic '60s, S.F. was experiencing the same wild lysergic rush as that then being felt throughout the whole of western culture and, as a result, was at its most creative and, arguably, its most glorious.

In retrospect, a backlash was perhaps inevitable. The new wave's insistent freedom-of-speech attitude, especially regarding taboo areas like sex and sexuality, provoked extreme reactions from its adversaries. *New Worlds* luminary Thomas Disch's book *Camp Concentration*, with its inmates raised to genius levels of intelligence after infection from an altered strain of syphilis, met with a huge controversy on its release in 1968. The next year, Norman Spinrad's *Bug Jack Barron*, detailing the Faustian struggles (and, in part, the sex life) of a confrontational near-future media icon, would likewise receive a heap of approbation in with the acclaim. The science fiction readership of the late '60s and the early '70s was often venomously polarised around the new wave vs. old wave issue, with the entrenched 'old wave' camp being the larger and therefore the side that would eventually prevail. It was as if the genre's followers had in the main decided that the new wave's view of fractured and chaotic, psychologically unstable times to come (even if that appraisal has since proven to be unnervingly accurate) was not the gleaming vision of the future that they really wanted.

The campaign to re-establish science fiction as a reassuring glimpse into America's intergalactic future would seem to have commenced in 1966, there in the midst of the pre-hippy hubbub, with the first season of *Star Trek*. Despite stand-out episodes by leading lights of the new wave like Harlan Ellison, the series marked a sharp U-turn towards the grandiose, conservative America-in-space tradition of the '20s and the '30s, at least in comparison with English television's quirky S.F. offerings of the middle-to-late '60s such as Patrick McGoochan's *The Prisoner* which, with its distrustful attitude to government and shifting levels of reality, seemed more of a new wave endeavour. In the literature itself, while many of the genre's most radical talents would go on to publish stand-out works throughout the '70s, the '80s and beyond, these would be mostly writings that refused to recognise existing boundaries and thus would not be recognised as science fiction: J.G. Ballard's novels *Concrete Island*, *Crash* and *High-Rise*, which focus an alienated gaze upon aspects of modern urban living, are a good example. With its most extraordinary innovators thus ruled out or marginalised, the definition of S.F. was gradually contracted to its space-operatic pre-war state.



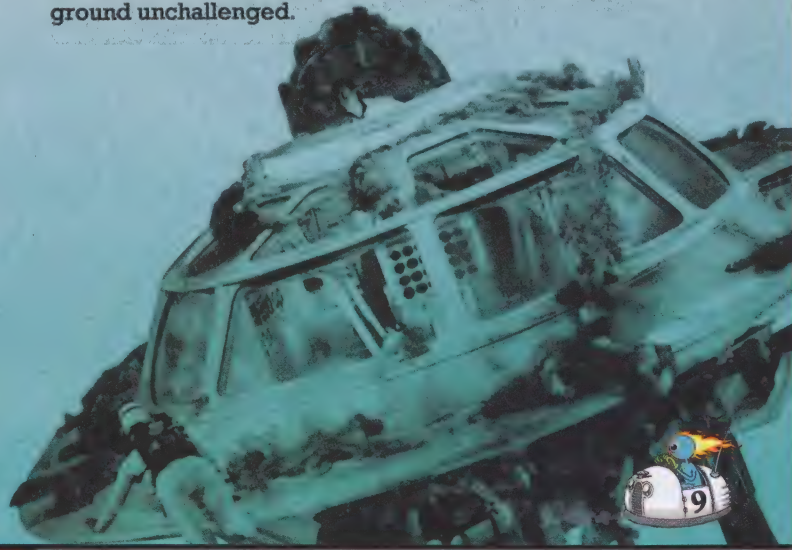
It seemed that the genre's anomalous experimental period was drawing to a close, with this nowhere more evident than in the era's science fiction cinema. In 1968, Stanley Kubrick's hallucinatory *2001: a Space Odyssey* was seen as both intelligent and cutting-edge progressive, a new wave work even though adapted from a story by the more traditional Arthur C. Clarke. The S.F. movies of the early 1970s, although less celebrated, are still mostly pessimistic and dystopian in their themes. Andrei Tarkovsky's excellent *Solaris* in 1972, based on the work of the ingenious Russian mastermind Stanislaw Lem, was a decidedly new wave affair in terms of both its take on science fiction and its take on cinema. With Michael Crichton's *Westworld* in 1973 we still see Frankenstein-like doubts about where science and technology are leading us, while in John Boorman's hugely underrated *Zardoz* we have a surreal and often wonderfully inventive narrative...senile immortals shuffling and dribbling at an eternal tea-dance...that could have come straight from Michael Moorcock's tenure at *New Worlds*. That same year, Moorcock's own *The Final Programme* would be filmed by visually stylish Robert Fuest with Jon Finch as Jerry Cornelius and Jenny Runacre as Moorcock's proto-Margaret Thatcher villainess, Miss Brunner. Although understandably derided by its author as a camped-up adaptation of his far superior book, *The Final Programme* is still a much more progressive S.F. movie than the counter-revolutionary science fiction cinema that would soon follow. *Logan's Run*, released 1976, while hardly ground-breaking in terms of its delivery or content, would seem almost avant-garde inside twelve months with the arrival of George Lucas's first (or perhaps fourth) outing in the all-devouring Star Wars franchise.

Lucas, who'd apparently originally wanted to secure the rights to movie-serial space adventurer *Flash Gordon*, served up a warmed-over broth of what seemed to be every old-school S.F. pot-boiler he'd ever heard of, and in doing so ensured that the field would be forcibly returned to the simplistic and triumphal level of the earliest American excursions in the genre. This was fundamentalist S.F., practically born-again, and it would obviously resonate with the ultra-conservative Reagan administration that came into power just two years later. Ronald Reagan would treat the shamelessly adolescent *Star Wars* as an endless source of metaphor and inspiration, almost to the point where one suspected that he'd dozed off halfway through the film and had awoken to assume that he was being briefed on policy. During his presidency, when according to more recently released Russian accounts the world came closer to nuclear annihilation than the average person could have possibly imagined, Reagan would label the Soviet Union as 'the Evil Empire' and would raise the already considerable international tension by announcing that the U.S. was embarking on a technologically-unfeasible missile defence shield program which was christened 'Star Wars'. While there'd previously been some overlap between science fiction and American Intelligence and military concerns...the strange and lyrical Cordwainer Smith worked for the O.S.S., forerunner to the C.I.A. as Paul S. Linebarger, for example...it was in the great affinity that Ronald Reagan (and more lately George W. Bush) felt with George Lucas's creation that this union, and science fiction's function as America's projected future dreamtime, became glaringly apparent.

Actually, the connection between science fiction and the U.S.A.'s military destiny was established in the 1950s with the setting up of DARPA, the Defence Advanced Research Projects Agency. Created when the nation was still reeling from the shock of Russia having beaten them to outer space by launching Sputnik I, DARPA was meant to ensure that America would always be one step ahead by actively researching and developing ideas that would have previously been confined to the domain of fantasy.

Amongst DARPA's more recent schemes is the initiative, which has been sub-contracted out to private companies, for the development of packs of robot hunting-dogs. Then there is DARPA's work on a self-replicating robot system known as SELF (Self-Explanation Learning Framework), which would theoretically produce automatons that could construct improved new versions of themselves, or even modify their own design while they are in the processes of being built. In July 2008 came news of a battlefield-robot that could fuel itself by ingesting organic matter. Worries that this might mean the device would eat dead soldiers or perhaps an insufficiently fleet-footed live civilian were dismissed by DARPA with assurances that their war-machine was in fact a gentle herbivore. Add on accounts of remote viewers or the foaming mad attempts to create 'Jedi' super-soldiers chronicled in Jon Ronson's original non-fiction book *The Men who Stare at Goats* and it becomes clear that America's relationship with S.F. is one of some several decades standing, which extends into both foreign and domestic policy, and which isn't always an entirely healthy proposition.

Since the 1970s, the literature of science fiction has proved more resistant to coherent overall analysis, lacking the clearly defined trends and movements of its earlier decades. In general, the mainstream of the genre would still seem to be space fiction, wandering out among the nebulae in vessels that are carefully extrapolated from what we now know of astrophysics; 'hard' S.F. that can be seen as an extension of John W. Campbell's nuts-and-bolts, hardware-fixated tenure at *Astounding*. There have been various refinements in regard to style or content, and yet lacking the political or cultural agendas of a Michael Moorcock or a Harlan Ellison these tend to have resulted in new fashions for the field rather than a full-blown new wave such as the one that had attempted to completely redefine the subject in America and the U.K. during the 1960s. For example, William Gibson's splendidly inventive *Neuromancer*, published 1985, would combine the then-new technologies of personal computers and the internet with ideas from mythology or fable in a way that brought to mind the writings of '60s S.F. author Roger Zelazny (in whose *Lord of Light* we have a pantheon of Hindu gods realised or recreated by means of advanced technology), while having many new developments that were entirely Gibson's. *Neuromancer* would attract the label 'cyberpunk' which, as with terms like 'graphic novel', one suspects was coined for the convenience of a marketing department somewhere. While there would be many fascinating and remarkable new authors to emerge from under cyberpunk's expansive banner, such as Lewis Shiner or Bruce Sterling, the phenomenon itself did not attempt to radically transform S.F. and ultimately perhaps did no more than to provide fresh window-dressing for the genre. The same might be said of later variations such as Steampunk, which was inspired by retro-fitted Victorian science fiction such as some of Michael Moorcock's oeuvre or K.W. Jeter's *Morlock Night*: the innovations are mostly in terms of style and content, rather than the questioning of the form itself that typified *New Worlds* during its heyday. This is not to criticise the many excellent works that have emerged from these sub-genres, but simply to remark that they leave the conservative domination of science fiction's central ground unchallenged.



One phenomenon that has been noticeable since the 1970s is that of S.F.'s gradual acceptance as an area worthy of consideration by authors who are more usually known for works of literary fiction. Doris Lessing had employed devices of the genre in her work for many years without being considered a science fiction author, and the same is true of the inspired Angela Carter: while her early novels like *The Infernal Desire Machine of Doctor Hoffman* have numerous S.F. elements, it seems more that her intention was to explore literary themes without restricting her extraordinary imagination. Kurt Vonnegut may fall into the same category, with his first books (*Sirens of Titan*, *Cat's Cradle* and *Slaughterhouse 5* provide good examples) making knowing reference to already-established genre clichés, often through the agency of Vonnegut's imaginary pulp science fiction author Kilgore Trout. The writer Russell Hoban would experiment with post-apocalyptic future world scenarios in his hypnotic *Ridley Walker*, Margaret Atwood would make science fiction into a laboratory for her feminist thought-experiment *The Handmaid's Tale* and in second novel *Walking on Glass* Iain Banks would use an S.F. narrative for one of the book's intersecting levels of reality, before progressing (as Iain M. Banks) to the hardcore, unabashed intelligent space-opera of his Culture novels. Although all of the above would have been comfortably included under the science fiction rubric in the flexible and boundary-breaking new wave days, since the contraction of science fiction's mandate to almost solely intergalactic fiction in the wake of *Star Wars*, they are more likely to be perceived as 'serious' writers playing with the genre's possibilities than as genuine S.F. authors who had started their careers within that genre's confines. As for writers who were in the latter category, like Moorcock, Ballard or the fiercely individualistic M. John Harrison, these were seen increasingly in the post-Lucas era as being outside the field's narrowing boundaries. Even Harrison's superb neo-space-opera *Light* in 2002 was probably viewed more as a science fiction detour by a literary author rather than as a completely logical progression for the man who'd written *The Machine in Shaft Ten*. As for brilliant outré talents such as *Dodgem Logic's* own Steve Aylett, they exist so far outside the currently restricted limits of S.F. as to be practically disqualified, like most of the authors above, from serious consideration as writers contributing to an inclusive and expansive healthy genre.

Similar conditions would seem to apply in cinema and television, with so many shows and movies haphazardly utilising science fiction elements that the genre becomes diffused, making it difficult to pin down what material should be classified as S.F. and what shouldn't. Joss Whedon's *Firefly* clearly falls within the mainstream of the genre, but what of an unravelling sub-Marvel Comics mess like *Heroes*? What the hell is *Lost* even supposed to be? Is *24* intended as science fiction, given that it happens in a more or less unrecognisable society where all the laws of probability are different? What about gay gothic prison drama *Oz* with its experimental ageing drug (the crippling effects of which wear off the moment you stop taking it)? S.F. would seem to have become a kind of decoration, an accessory, mood-lighting that can be cast, clumsily, on any worn-out subject, giving it a sparkling veneer of innovation and modernity. Squint at *The Sweeney* through the S.F. filter and you're watching *Life on Mars*. Do the same thing with *Gilligan's Island* and you're watching *Lost*.

In the material that is unquestionably meant as science fiction, the one lasting innovation seems to be in rendering unlikely situations more 'realistic' by the application of a layer of dirt and texture. This trend probably commenced with Dan O'Bannon and John Carpenter's preposterous and incredible *Dark Star* during 1973, with its space demolition crew stuck on a mission lasting twenty years and slowly going stir-crazy within the cluttered confines of their rusting star-ship. Six years later, in 1979, screenwriter Dan O'Bannon would bring some of the same messy claustrophobia to Ridley Scott's first movie in the *Alien* franchise. The *Alien* films, clear-cut S.F., are interesting in terms of our thesis that science fiction represents the dream-life of America, particularly the militaristic second outing in the series, *Aliens* in 1986. From its title onwards, the whole series would seem to be governed principally by xenophobia, and in the casual dialogue of *Aliens'* space-marines it isn't difficult to see a U.S. military attitude to foreign cultures showing through. The mission is a 'bug-hunt' to wipe out the film's titular 'xenomorphs' (or 'alien forms'), a term which could presumably apply as readily to gooks or rag-heads or to any enemy dehumanised and pictured as an insect in order to make their extermination seem more palatable. And in the suggestion that the safest way to deal with the aggressive aliens is to 'nuke 'em from orbit' there is possibly a premonition of the recent high-altitude bombing strategy responsible for such a lot of 'friendly fire' fatalities.

A recent entry to the Dan O'Bannon school of grime and claustrophobia would be the re-tooled television series *Battlestar Galactica*. Starting life as a gutsy re-imagining of the original's Bonanza-in-Space premise, by the middle of its run the series seemed to be attempting to reflect current hot topics like the War on Terror or the Abu Ghraib abuses in Iraq, metaphors it would prove unable to sustain and which would ultimately be abandoned in a literal *Deus ex machina* 'It was the will of God' finale.

Our S.F. vision, our projected future history, has dwindled to a baby roasting on a spit amidst an irretrievably collapsed environment. Let's face it; realistically we're never going to invent warp-drive, are we?

And yet, even as S.F.'s hopes for an unbounded interplanetary future seem to have exploded on the launch-pad, its ideas and aspirations still resound in the boyish imaginations of our leaders and those who control our destinies. The sometimes hideous architectural follies that loom on the modern urban skyline often seem not so much genuine progressive concepts that are reaching for a new society as they do evidence of a planner's nostalgia for the Dan Dare or Buck Rogers cityscapes of his receding childhood. As we slouch into our new 21st century that previously sounded so exciting and so futuristic we seem to reach for tired science fiction concepts as a way of understanding our increasingly uncertain landscape and of plotting our way through it, even if these naive notions are transparently inadequate. This phenomenon, though usually it has American science fiction at its root, is by no means restricted to America, or even to the west. Consider former westernised high-flying Saudi playboy Osama Bin Laden, a man known to be fond of western science fiction novels in his wasted youth. Could he have possibly based his persona on the brilliant and far-sighted genius Harry Seldon, star of Isaac Asimov's *Foundation* trilogy, who has had the foresight to record directions for his followers that will guide them, even centuries after his death? Perhaps if we recall that Al Qaeda is a term in Arabic that means 'the base' or 'the foundation', the idea will not sound so far-fetched.

We see here the tension between a projected scientific future and the comforting religious certainties of a puritan past that typifies so much of the U.S.'s contribution to the genre, and which possibly explains why the biggest American 'S.F.' phenomenon of recent years has been the series *Left Behind*, a Christian fundamentalist depiction of those 'left behind' to deal with all the horrors of a post-apocalyptic Earth after the decent Christian folk have all been taken up to Heaven in the Rapture (a means of extra-terrestrial transportation that compares unfavourably with Francis Godwin's geese-drawn lunar chariot in terms of scientific accuracy).

So, what of S.F. in the present day? Considering two recent films may be instructive. In James Cameron's *Avatar*, apparently breathtaking visually and technically, we seem to have in story terms a straightforward development of the 'cowboys in space' idea: if Peter Hyams' 1981 film *Outland* was *High Noon* in space then *Avatar* could be seen as equivalent to such revisionist 'maybe we were wrong to wipe out the Native Americans' western movies of Viet Nam era 1970 as *Soldier Blue* and *Little Big Man*; as a sudden pang of cinematic conscience coming in the middle of a period of real-world military expansionism. This is science fiction used conservatively, as a kind of salve.

The other recent S.F. movie to consider would be director John Hillcoat's adaptation of Cormac McCarthy's book *The Road*, in that here we see an informed American imagination that has reached a real end of the road and hit the buffers. Peering into an uncomfortably near future, we're shown not a Gernsback daydream of food pills and flying cars, nor yet an endlessly unreeling space-opera about the interesting forms of life that we are sure to find on other planets, but instead are forced to think about the prospects of sustainable life for the planet we are standing on.

Finally, if there is any last remaining doubt that the suspect ideas and ideologies of early 20th century U.S. science fiction still pervade and permeate the culture that we and our loved ones struggle to get by in, you might like to bear in mind the following scenario: if you or one of your descendants at some future date should be amongst the mob of protesters besieging yet another inconclusive global climate summit, and if you should furthermore be incapacitated by a stun-gun wielded by an over-zealous riot-cop, remember as you lay there twitching in a helpfully conductive pool of your own urine that you've just had an encounter with a TASER. This delightful instrument, which shoots a wire-trailing mini-harpoon into its victim and then stuns them to submission by administering a powerful electric voltage down the wire, was first conceived of by the bright-eyed, ivory-hunting and entirely fictional protagonist of Victor Appleton's rousing adventures. TASER stands for Thomas A. Swift's Electric Rifle. The 'A' was added to make it sound snappier than 'TSER'.

Perhaps the last word should go to Jack McBrayer's terminally naive NBC page Kenneth on Tina Fey's frequently hilarious TV satire *30 Rock*: "'Believe in the stars". Does that even *mean* anything anymore?"

Believe in the stars.



PTOOF! DICK FOREMAN TAKES A SQUINT AT 40 ODD YEARS OF PSYCHEDELIC THE SKELETON KEY TO THE COSMOS

On November 16, 1938, chemist Doctor Albert Hoffman first synthesised Lysergic Acid Diethylamide (LSD). Ptoof! A few years passed before he checked out the stuff some more. A 250 microgram dose, taken by way of an experiment, opened his consciousness to an astounding level of perception, intense & at first terrifying. He must have been a man of steady nerve, though. Once he'd established that he'd not in any way poisoned himself, he began to relax into it.

... Little by little I could begin to enjoy the unprecedented colours and plays of shapes that persisted behind my closed eyes. Kaleidoscopic, fantastic images surged in on me, alternating, variegated, opening and then closing themselves in circles and spirals, exploding in coloured fountains, rearranging and hybridising themselves in constant flux...

He wasn't the first human being to enter such a state of mind. With or without the aid of naturally occurring substances (extracted from herbs, fungi & cacti), people have sought essentially similar experiences since pre-history. On the whole, it was not just done for entertainment. The sense of profundity & awe that can suffuse these experiences tended to associate them with religion; contact with god, or gods, within ourselves.

Although Hoffman's LSD excursion was to change his life & view of what constitutes 'reality', he was not apparently an intensely religious man. Instead, Hoffman saw potential in LSD as a psychiatric tool, & was thus able to initiate its manufacture by Sandoz, the company for whom he worked. He found it inconceivable that anyone would use LSD as a recreational drug. On that score, within 20 years, he was proved wrong.

The term 'psychedelic' was coined in 1957 by psychiatrist Humphry Osmond, who was by then making use of the substance in his work. It is derived from the Greek words for 'soul' (psyche) & 'to manifest' (*delein*). It refers to changes of perception; altered states of awareness; mystical states; synaesthesia and... Let's not use the word 'hallucination', shall we? Not unless we're really sure what isn't a hallucination.

In 1953, Osmond had introduced the writer Aldous Huxley to mescaline, the key active ingredient of the peyote cactus used in rituals by Native Americans. Huxley went on to sample LSD & to write of his experiences in 'The Doors of Perception'. The title came from poet, artist & visionary William Blake: *If the doors of perception were cleansed, everything will appear to man as it is, infinite.* Cleanse those doors, the soul becomes manifest, & you are in the realm of psychedelia.

So far, so elite. How did psychedelics emerge from this rarefied world of doctors, psychiatrists & intellectuals to the 'street'? How did the genie get out of the bottle?

It happened in the USA, largely, & there were two threads to the story.

The first was one of those psychiatrists, but one for whom the therapeutic environment simply could not contain the potential of psychedelic drugs. After experiencing them, he became a man with a mission to spread & democratise their use. He had a gift for the gab, which combined with the power & influence that his professional position initially bestowed upon him to make him a charismatic figure. Once described by US president Richard Nixon as the most dangerous man in America, he was Doctor Timothy Leary.

Leary latched on to the hip-speak of the times with memorable catch-phrases like Turn on, tune in, drop out & stuffed his best seller 'The Politics of Ecstasy' with passionate purple prose & roller coaster psycho babble. Arch media manipulator, he'd get himself interviewed by Playboy & talk up LSD as an aphrodisiac. He set up counter cultural organisations like the 'League of Spiritual Discovery' & distributed the drug as far as he could – until the law stepped in. The film rights to his subsequent story are doubtless doing the rounds.

The other thread was the Beats. No strangers to drug use, marijuana included, many of these 50s hip-cats were eager to be swallowing psychedelic drugs. Steeped in beat lore, characters such as author Ken Kesey & lyricist Robert Hunter enrolled as guinea pigs in the then government sponsored experimental use of LSD. Turned on, there was no turning them off. 'Acid', as the drug was by then known, was on the scene. Ptoof!

Kesey went on to co-found the 'Merry Pranksters' & set up the 'Acid Tests' – anarchic multi-media events in which the knowing or unknowing consumption of LSD was an essential element. When the drug was made illegal in the mid 1960s, street production continued with the work of outlaw chemists such as Augustus Stanley Owsley.

Psychedelic culture is characteristically underpinned by a sense of connection. Little details, disorientating elements, in-jokes, cosmic references... Only another person who was as high as you are right now could have woven these in. And it began here...



IN THE LAND OF THE NIGHT THE SHIP OF THE SUN IS DRAWN BY THE GRATEFUL DEAD

Psychedelic insights can & will wind their way into every cabinet of culture but, arguably, in that time of acid's first widespread exposure, it was to popular music that they bound themselves with the most spectacular results. By 1968, psychedelic rock was a flourishing concern.

A quote from Jerry Garcia (of whom more to come): ... *'For me all music is psychedelic. Country & Western music is psychedelic. The blues is psychedelic. Everything is psychedelic. All music.'* Psychedelic drug experience will bear this out. Get high & pay attention to any music, from Bach to the Baka pygmies, & a new wealth of detail, nuance & emotionality can seem to open up & engulf the listener. So let's look at music created, broadly speaking, by psychedelic drug users for consumption of psychedelic drug users.

Scene one may well occur in the Red Dog Saloon, Nevada. It's one night in summer 1965 & the Charlatans are setting up to play. They're lavishly dressed in a motley of late Victorian & Edwardian old West styles, & their set will tune into a variety of musical forms – blues, rock, folk, hipster jazz & even vaudeville. It's the first night of a season, the story has it, & starting out as they intend to continue, they've each just taken a hit of LSD. Ptoof!

Cut to Santa Cruz in California, a few months later, & the first of the Merry Pranksters' Acid Tests, where, in amongst the mayhem, crazed ranters, feedback & chaos, house band the Warlocks have decided the time is right to play a short set before dispersing to mingle with the revellers. Their repertoire, at the time, mixes hit record covers like 'I'm a Hog for you Baby' & 'In the Midnight Hour' with folk-blues tunes like 'I Know You Rider'. Later, or maybe at some other Acid Test, band members will noodle along on whatever instruments come to hand as veteran beat Neal Cassady takes the microphone for one of his inspired free-form raps.

Within a few months they've hit on a name that has been lying in wait for them. They are the Grateful Dead. They hook up with Kesey's fellow guinea pig, Robert Hunter, & he & lead guitarist Jerry Garcia go on to craft a raft of extraordinary songs like 'Dupree's Diamond Blues', 'Dark Star' & 'China Cat Sunflower'... *...A leaf of all colours plays / a golden string fiddle / to a double-e waterfall over my back...* With acid slyness, Hunter later says: *'Nobody ever asked me the meaning of this song. People seem to know exactly what I'm talking about.'*

Montage the shots now, as the movement gains momentum through 66 & 67. Sometime home to the Dead, San Francisco's Haight-Ashbury district becomes a focal spot, attracting folk who become known as 'hippies' & celebrate their culture in events such as the Trips Festival & the Human Be-In. At venues like the Avalon Ballroom, the Carousel & the Matrix Club, there's a constant circulation of bands such as The Quicksilver Messenger Service & Big Brother & the Holding Company. The most accomplished of these draw together musical influences from a diverse & iconic range – the Beatles & 'British Invasion' R'n'B; the exploratory jazz of Miles Davies & John Coltrane; jugband & bluegrass; John Cage & Stockhausen...

Psychedelic nodes open up across the United States. Los Angeles follows the Byrds (whose 3rd album, 'Fifth Dimension', was their first foray) with Love, the Doors & Buffalo Springfield. Established luminaries such as Bob Dylan & Paul Simon bring an acid edge to their music – if only for a while. In New York there's acid radicals the Fugs & zoned out folkies the Holy Modal Rounders, while in Detroit righteous tripsters the MC5. It's everywhere. The music business latches on, signs up & sells them, along with a wave of diluted acid also-rans – the Mamas & the Papas; Sonny & Cher; Scott McKenzie...

Astute readers will have noted the absence of female names in this story-so-far. The psychedelic drugs can bring revelation & inspiration, but not necessarily enlightenment. Culture in these times was still heavily male dominated. Seeds of change were germinating, however, & a few strong women made their mark. Though Janis Joplin is rightly respected, it was Grace Slick who wrote & sang some of the most resonant songs of the time. When she joined Jefferson Airplane in late 1966, she brought with her the song 'White Rabbit', linking Lewis Carroll's Wonderland to the psychedelic experience. With its flamenco style arrangement, the Airplane's version remains quintessentially acid rock, as do many of her subsequent compositions with the band.

By the end of the 1960s, psychedelia in the USA had impacted with the shock of the new. It was then to founder on fashion, as we'll see, but outside the States it was ripe to spread.

SHE'S OFTEN INCLINED TO BORROW SOMEBODY'S DREAMS TILL TOMORROW

A taste for psychedelic music surged rapidly through the world, inspired by & feeding back to the scene that was developing in the US.

Britain, boosted by the awesome success of the Beatles, was emerging from 50s austerity to become an influential centre for fashion & pop culture. Movers & shakers in this scene – beat poets, amphetamine popping mods, fashion icons & film stars – were, like their American counterparts, more than ready to neck acid as soon as it became available. Soon, UK pop music began to step out into uncharted territory.

What if a pop song didn't have to conform to established structure (verse, chorus, middle eight etc.), but could sweep you along on a mental journey that left you so very far from where you began? What if a song contain edelements from other musical styles blending string quartets & sitars, brass bands & banjos? What could you do to enhance a song with new musical technologies – multi track recording, mellotrons, phasing & tape loops - or the techniques of avant-garde composers & improvisers? Where could you go with lyrics that dispensed with boy-girl love songs, & referenced any aspect of the human condition on which you chose to focus? Why, indeed, make sense at all, when in nonsense there was joy & illumination?

You can pick & mix the songs yourself, but in any of the following you'll hear these questions asked & answers found – the Beatles' 'Tomorrow Never Knows'; 'A Day in the Life'; 'I Am the Walrus'; the Rolling Stones' 'We Love You'; 'Have You Seen Your Mother, Baby, Standing in the Shadows?'; the Yardbirds' 'Happenings Ten Years' Time Ago'; the Who's 'Happy Jack'; Jimi Hendrix's 'Third Stone from the Sun'; Cream's 'White Room'; Donovan's 'Hampstead Incident'; Fleetwood Mac's 'Oh Well'; The Small Faces' 'Itchycoo Park'...

To many of these established performers, the psychedelic muse paid but a brief visit & then moved on. In their wake came others whose commitment appeared greater.

At Abbey Road Studios in February 1967, just down the corridor from the Beatles, recording 'Sergeant Pepper', Pink Floyd was working on their 'Piper at the Gates of Dawn' album. They were also playing regularly at scene-makers Joe Boyd & John 'Hoppy' Hopkins' new UFO Club in London. By the time of Piper's release they'd nailed psychedelia on 7" single with the exquisite 'See Emily Play'. Songwriter Roger 'Syd' Barrett was at his short-lived creative peak. The album set out to explore outer & inner space, its lyrics often referencing the deep strangeness of children's stories, its restless, unpredictable music mutating mod R'n'B with Middle Eastern streaks, pastoral interludes & jazzy flourishes. It blended whimsy & awe in a fine balance, setting a high watermark that, on long playing record at least, no one else was to reach with such consistency.

They were not alone, however. Treading the boards at UFO, the Roundhouse, the Marquee & beyond were the like of Soft Machine, the Crazy World of Arthur Brown, the Social Deviants, Tomorrow, Family & Fairport Convention. The latter, along with Scotland's Incredible String Band, took the styles of folk music & began to feed them through the psychedelic mincer. It was a time of musical flux, of continual, breathtaking surprise. 'Minds blown', in the parlance of the day, musicians with existing track records sought to re-invent themselves. Jazzy blues man Zoot Money turned up with Dantalion's Chariot; Spencer Davies Group front man Steve Winwood with Traffic. Mod soul boys the Action began a more gradual transition to become Mighty Baby, one of the few UK bands to explore the looser, jamming style of psychedelia pioneered by the Grateful Dead.

The floodgates were open, new bands emerging at an exponential rate. Inevitably, not everyone got it right – the craze for bizarre band names, for example, soon reaching a level of desperation with the likes of Pregnant Insomnia and Crocheted Doughnut Ring. (One can only speculate as to the quality of the acid they'd imbibed, if imbibe they ever did.) But they got to make records all the same, because – as in America – record company execs were falling over themselves to get a piece of the new action. In time & in keeping with the developing ethos of the 'alternative society' that was seeking to establish itself, attempts were made to set up independent labels. One such, Head Records, released the first album by Mighty Baby – with a fine Martin Sharp sleeve design, featuring a 'solarised' image from a Tarzan illustration. Label mates were Harvey Matusow's Jew's Harp Band – demonstrating that psychedelic inspiration was not always matched by business acumen.

So in Britain, so elsewhere. Books, blogs & compilation sleeve-notes will not only expand this story, if you have the interest, but also tell you what happened as psychedelic music's wave swept around the world – countries such as Germany, Japan & Brazil producing their own fascinating variants. Ptoof ad infinitum.

BLOWING IN THE MIND

Psychedelia infused its way through the art & culture of the late 1960s & early 70s. And just as the music's precedents fed into its development, so it was elsewhere. Psychedelic art & literature drew on the works of Surrealism & Dada; of Pre-Raphaelite & Art Nouveau artists; of symbolist, situationist & beatnik writers... Unsurprisingly, it also looked to arts associated with religious experience – tankas, mandalas, illuminated manuscripts, the works of visionaries. It was omnivorous, all embracing & egalitarian, valuing folk arts & common crafts as much as the works of the elite. Psychedelic perception found something in common in all these forms of expression, so why not run them all through the kaleidoscope? Merge them, mix them, play with them & see what came out?

Psychedelic imagery existed in close association with the music. Stages were bathed in liquid light shows. Cut back to the Charlatans playing the Red Dog Saloon in '65. Light show pioneer Bill Ham was there too, operating his rig, Light Sound Dimension (ah, those initials!) Once his eyeballs had popped back into his head, Family Dog man Chet Helms was keen to get Ham's system operating back in SF, where he & his cohorts were bringing the Avalon Ballroom to life. Other leading luminaries emerged: Glen McKay's Headlights system, and, in the UK, Mark Boyle. Luminescent projections, swirling oil & water slides presented a virtual environment of colour & movement, rather than spotlighting the artists.

Posters & handbills advertising these shows provided further opportunity, this time for a hairy bunch of graphic artists to strut their stuff. They combined original work with collaged art from any source, mostly recreating it in stark primary colours that clashed to provoke the eye, op-art style. Rules were to be broken. Who says the lettering has to be clear & legible, when it can swirl delightfully across the page, playing games with foreground & background? Sure you can read it eventually, & when you do it's that same *the-penny's-dropped* moment you get so often when you're high. Check out works by US artists Rick Griffin, Alton Kelly, Stanley 'Mouse' Miller, Wes Wilson & Victor Moscoso, amongst others, to see where they were at in the States. While in the UK some of the brightest works were by the hands of Martin Sharp, 'Hapshash & the Coloured Coat', Barney Bubbles & 'The Fool'. It wasn't just posters. The latter also provided a short-lived mural for the Beatles' *Apple* headquarters in London. Wherever they could they'd turn a hand. It wasn't always easy to make a living.

Many of these artists were also comic book devotees, the psychedelic perspective suggesting many new possibilities for this art-form. Opportunities arose with the development of the underground papers (see *Dodgem Logic* issue 1 & a critical part of the survey here). If regular newspapers had their 'funny pages', why shouldn't the underground give space to comic strips reflecting the humour, politics and perspectives of the counter culture? Content incorporated black & stoner humour, uninhibited sexuality, gung-ho radicalism & exploration of the furthest reaches of mind-boggling, graphic design.

Check out the late 60s work of Robert Crumb, Gilbert Shelton, Robert Williams, Dave Sheridan & Fred Schrier, amongst many more. It was compiled into or drawn exclusively for underground comics, like 'Zap' & 'Slow Death Funnies', the format thriving for another decade or so. UK forays into this field were on the whole less memorable (but had their moments – look for work by Edward Barker, Mal Dean, Bryan Talbot, William Rankin & more).

Psychedelia tended to find its most successful expression in this kind of 'outsider' art form, its purity too often becoming compromised even as it became a fashionable influence on many of the more mainstream arts.

Perhaps because of the money-intensive nature of the business, movies of an intentionally & wholly psychedelic nature were comparatively rare, though a good many, in those times, featured at least one trippy sequence. Check out 'The Trip', 'Easy Rider', 'Performance', 'Chappaqua', '2001: A Space Odyssey' for psychedelic scenes, or delve into their contemporaries in underground cinema. Here psychedelia was often bracketed – not entirely comprehensibly – with the occult, as in the work of Kenneth 'Lucifer Rising' Anger, but in works by the likes of Stan Brakhage & Harry Smith the acid light shone more clearly through.

It's an arguable point that poetry, in its often-microscopic examination of experience, is on common ground with psychedelia, with or without the drugs. The flavour of the times can perhaps be caught in events such as the 1965 'Poetry Olympics' at the Albert Hall, UK, partially filmed by Peter Whitehead as 'Wholly Communion'; or the publication of the anthology 'Love, Love, Love – the New Love Poetry' in 1967, with a cover by Hapshash, which contained the work of more than a few of the psychedelically informed. Novelists with an acid edge included Thomas Pynchon, Richard Brautigan & numerous science fiction/fantasy writers of the time.



SOMETIMES THE LIGHT'S ALL SHINING ON ME, OTHER TIMES I CAN BARELY SEE



Nothing Lasts by Zane Kesey

A year or two into the 70s, Ken Kesey wrote: '...It didn't take us long to begin to take on new shells – different shells, to be sure, of dazzling new design, but, if anything, more dangerous than our original middle-class-American armour plate... because drugs, those miracle tools that had first stripped us, were now being included in the manufacturing of our new shell of theories.

LSD & its like can change the course of a human life, but not necessarily for the better. Steering that course requires a variety of resources & a good head wind. Not everyone had the resources & for some the wind blew the wrong way.

There were casualties. To say that someone 'took too much acid' is a tabloid-esque oversimplification. A more accurate story of the fate that overtook Syd Barrett or Roky Erikson (of Texas psychedelic band Thirteenth Floor Elevators) will take into account genetic factors, how well equipped they were in the first place to cope with both success & stress. The same may be said of those who subsequently succumbed to heroin & cocaine, to downers & booze.

Others coped well enough, but in time the vision eluded them. This is not to devalue their subsequent work, simply to say that it lacked the acid touch. The experience, as Hoffman discovered, could be profoundly scary. From this brink, retreat was an option taken by many. The drift of fashion assisted them. Paisley was looking distinctly naff by 1974.

American musicians turned in droves to country music & rootsy introspection, while their UK counterparts had a tendency to become obsessed with the techniques discovered in that first flash of late 60's adventure, in what became 'progressive rock'. Others moved from the confusion that accompanied revelation toward religious ideologies. The Maharishi, the Hare Krishna cult, Shri Bhagwan, the Scientologists & many more were waiting to pick them off. George Harrison retreated from 'Within You, Without You' to 'My Sweet Lord'. Most of Mighty Baby, (along with Fairport's Richard Thompson), got kitted out in turbans, & soaked themselves in Sufism. Some played darker games with the gullible. The so-called 'families' of Charles Manson & Mel Lyman illustrated clearly where it could all go badly wrong. On a cosier note, fluffy but potentially no less dangerous, the 'New Age' movement was a further illustration.

Outside of music, stalwarts of the counter culture attempted to bring about social & technological change, guided in part by the holistic view of the world that acid had bestowed upon them.

It's beyond the scope of this piece to divert into, say, the social experimentation that occurred; the development of the women's movement (much needed, as we've seen!) or that of alternative technology.

Suffice to say, though their roots lay in the vision, their execution became a less psychedelic matter, reliant on idealism & hard work.

But for all this, aspects of psychedelic culture continued to emerge through successive trends & fashions. It was there, like a mycelium, its fruits the mushrooms just kept popping up – Ptoof! Ptoof! Ptoof!

Many of the artists, for example, who'd been associated with the posters, comics & record covers of the 60s, moved into other fields of art (painting, photography, film) where they continued to explore the vision. The likes of Mati Klarwein, Alex Grey, Melinda Gebbie, Robert Williams, Karl Ferris & more have remained with us, continuing to delight & challenge eyes & minds.

The term 'fractal' was coined by mathematician Benoit Mandelbrot in 1975. A rough or fragmented geometric shape that can be split into parts, each of which is (at least approximately) a reduced-size copy of the whole. Mandelbrot's formulae linked natural phenomena such as ferns & coastlines to high resolution computer graphics of an astonishing nature. For acid heads, the discovery was an affirmation – the work of this straight-laced, elderly academic somehow conferring respectability on visionary experience & stimulating many artists to explore its visual realms. Their work became closely associated with a new manifestation of psychedelia: the 'Rave' scene of the 1990s.

Cut back to 1971. Ex Soft Machinist Daevid Allen's new band, Gong, make their UK debut at the 2nd Glastonbury Festival, blending urgent, pounding rock, jazzy impro & synthesisers. That synth sound endures, mutates through the years. Even as Punk, in the late 70s, supposedly sweeps the boards clean, there's a new breed of hippies emerging. Known for a while as the 'crusties', they've taken on board Rasta styles & anarchist outlooks, & they're dancing to bands like Here & Now & Ozric Tentacles, close Gong associates. This music fuses with Chicago 'House' music from the US & 'Acid House' is with us. There are new drugs, ofcourse, but LSD is still to be found & they've even got their own Tim Leary in Terence McKenna. Remix culture & sampling transform the work of psychedelic revivalists like Primal Scream & the Shamen.



Chet Fest by Chris Shaw

WAITING FOR THE FINAL WORD

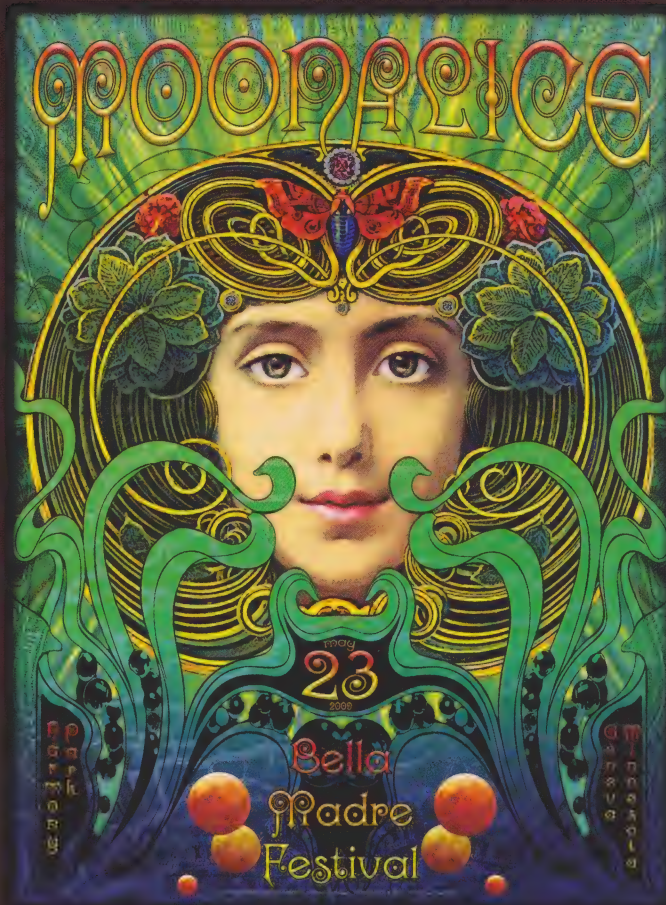
David Nelson is a psychedelic survivor. Founder member of Grateful Dead offshoot band New Riders of the Purple Sage; aficionado of bluegrass, country & western swing; in the 60s he pioneered the art of taping himself talking 'backwards', so that his words would emerge coherently but very weirdly when the tape was reversed. Why? Who knows? Nelson was probably just out of his head, but it took David Lynch another 20 years to use the technique in *Twin Peaks*. Nowadays, Nelson's hobby is making music on his laptop, but his main concern is his band. In the early '90s he hooked up with two younger musicians – fluid, Garcia-inspired guitarist Barry Sless, & versatile keyboard player Mookie Siegal.

With various drummers & bass men, the David Nelson Band has become one of the foremost 'jam bands' in the US today. Psychedelic jams might involve a bit of conventional soloing but they take a trip when the music starts to explore, take chances & let go in group-mind improvisation. The DNB mix lengthy abstract excursions up with good time country bar band rock, in a format established by old associates, the Dead.

The 'long strange trip' of the Grateful Dead continued through good times & bad until the death of Jerry Garcia in 1995. Most other bands of their era dissolved, but continue to re-group & reappear over the decades. The 1980s saw one particularly strong manifestation. Ironically naming themselves 'The Dinosaurus', members of Country Joe & the Fish, Quicksilver et al would get together, only for gigs they considered would be 'fun', to play wild, psychedelic music – particularly in their early years when Robert Hunter was in the line-up.

Younger musicians periodically returned to psychedelia, the 80s also harbouring the 'paisley underground' bands such as Rain Parade & the Dream Syndicate in the US. Meanwhile in the UK the style at least of psychedelic rock was kept alive by the likes of the Soft Boys, the Barracudas, the Magic Mushroom Band & the Bevis Frond.

But in 2010, the music is thriving, particularly in the USA. The 'jam band' scene is well established & harbours a good many musicians whose agenda remains multi-coloured, swirly & a little hard to read. Surviving Dead members & their contemporaries appear in a variety of line-ups with younger players, whose own new bands (Tea Leaf Green, Moe, Zen Tricksters, The Dragonflies...) come & go. Not everyone records but you can generally locate high quality live downloads, even if you can't make it to the shows. Old tunes from back in the day are sometimes over-relied on, but some keep turning out quality new material. Robert Hunter, though seldom playing live now, has been amazingly prolific – his still scintillating lyrics gracing new songs by the DNB, Cast of Clowns, the Trichromes, Rhythm Devils, Papa Mali & more. Newer, younger bands are emerging, the likes of Citay, Wooden Shjips & Assemble Head in Sunburst Sound weaving in their intricacies, along with the psychedelic elements of the so-called New Weird Americana movement.



Moonalice by Alexandra Fischer

The scene has led to a pick up in other psychedelic art forms including fine new posters from old survivors (Stanley Mouse, David Singer, Lee Conklin, Bob Masse) & from many newcomers. One band, Moonalice, have taken it upon themselves to promote the work of up & coming psychedelic artists by commissioning new posters for every show, & giving them away to audience members on the night, thus bringing to light artists such as Chris Shaw, Ron Donovan, & Alexandra Fischer. Techniques have changed over the decades – computer art programmes & access to full colour printing replacing scissors, paste & screen print. Evidence of the upswing can be found in the UK also – notably in the 'Psychedelic Wonderland' 2010 calendar produced by artist John Coulthart. With a preparatory steeping of his brain in UK 60s psychedelic music, Coulthart has synthesised elements of Victoriana & art nouveau with elaborate layering & fractals.

Today's psychedelic culture is not fashionable. It is not the groundswell movement of the 60s & early 70s. It's there for those who seek it, & mostly keeps below the radar of those who would find no value within it. In this sense it's truly 'underground'. You just have to follow the white rabbit...

Or indeed look at what you hold in your hands. This magazine's founder figure, it has to be said, is no stranger to the psychedelic muse & has probably blown more than a few minds over the past 20 years or so. His fairly recently completed 'Promethea' series of comics being one of his most overt explorations, linking transcendental experience to the philosophy of the occult, lushly illustrated & lavishly presented. Another mushroom...

So, look very carefully. Pay attention now. The weave of these words is wavering... The dots on this page are dancing...

Ptoof!



NO MORE BLOOD, NO MORE WAR

Weary of the news-media being full of war, bloodshed and killing?
Steve Moore says it's time to end all this ...

Another week. Another corpse. Another dismal parade of death through Wootton Bassett.

Another poor boy with no job and no prospects who joined the army in the hope of making a career ... who must have known there were risks, but never thought it would happen to *him*. Another mourning family, among hundreds.

And, no, don't mention the far more numerous Afghans or Iraqis who've been killed, fighting for something they believe in just as much as our boys do (or possibly even more ... they're the ones who've been invaded, after all). And for heaven's sake let's not talk about the thousands of innocent civilian casualties who've been caught up in all this: dead, wounded, maimed. That would just make far too many victims to think about and, anyway, that sort of thing happens in wartime, doesn't it?

Well, it's about time it stopped. Not just the Afghan War, or the Iraq War, or any other dirty little war you might care to mention. *All* war. Now. And for good. For any number of reasons, we simply can't afford to engage in this sort of idiotic behaviour any longer.

Let's put it bluntly. It's time the human race *fucking* well grew up.

All right, talking about all wars everywhere might seem a bit beyond the scope of a couple of pages, so let's start by concentrating on this country and the 21st century wars we're embroiled in. Now, by the time you read this, the election might have been won by a landslide of anti-war candidates, but let's face it, it's not very likely, is it? And both the major parties, Labour and Conservative, are fully committed to increased defence budgets, renewing the Trident missile system and fulfilling our obligations to NATO (or "doing whatever the Americans tell us to do"). And, of course, both those parties were in favour of invading Iraq, but as I write this, it's noticeable that that's this has barely got a mention in the election campaign.

Let's start with Iraq, then. Recent evidence to the Chilcot enquiry has plainly shown that this was illegal under international law, without a second UN resolution; while the alleged justification of "Weapons of Mass Destruction ready to use in 45 minutes" was just as plainly a hypocritical lie.

The fact that Donald Rumsfeld has frankly admitted that the Americans would have gone in anyway, with or without us, doesn't let us off the hook, and the idea that by joining up with them we might have been able to influence subsequent policy in the country has been shown to be a complete farce. So what have we achieved?

Well, apart from destroying Iraq's infrastructure and reducing it to a state frequently verging on civil war, we've managed to spend at least £8 billion on an illegal war. If that sounds an awful lot, it's mere peanuts compared to the Americans, who've spent some \$700 billion. As for Iraqi casualties, both combatant and civilian, estimates range from approximately 600,000 to 1,000,000. That's between two and four percent of the entire population. Now to my mind, that makes the leaders who took us into this, quite simply, war criminals; and all the politicians who backed them accessories. And have we brought Iraq the benefits of democracy? Of course we haven't. We've given them a thoroughly corrupt government that splits on tribal and sectarian lines. But we have provided a large number of western companies, mostly American, with enormous financial opportunities to help "reconstruct" the country. Haven't done much for the Iraqis, though.

So, if we're not having much luck with Iraq, what about Afghanistan? Once again, the invasion had no UN authorisation and was primarily a response to the September 11 attacks of 2001 ... attacks that almost certainly would never have taken place if the United States had ever pursued an even-handed policy in the Middle East. Essentially, then, the Americans have embroiled themselves in a war caused by their own stupidity, a fact which they still seem to be unable to wake up to; and the UK, in its own stupidity, has allowed itself to be drawn into it in just the same way as in Iraq. And the results? Well, who can say while the fighting's still going on, apart from more of the same gothic horror in Wootton Bassett? But so far there've been between 13,000 and 32,000 civilian deaths, while the UK has spent £10 billion, and the USA some \$265 billion. Perhaps I'd better not get started on the abuses of human rights in places like Guantanamo Bay and Abu Ghraib or the use of torture to obtain intelligence, because everybody knows those sort of things happen in a war situation anyway. As if that was any sort of excuse for this ultimately vile behaviour. Oh, yes, and we've given the Afghans a completely corrupt government as well. Funny how things happen like that, isn't it?

So here we are, stuck in two illegal, immoral, hideously bloody and completely unaffordable wars, and what are we doing? Are we trying to get out of them? No, we're simply throwing more money that we haven't got into them, and increasing defence spending. By its own estimate, the Ministry of Defence is spending over £36 billion this year, or 5.8% of total UK government expenditure. How much less hypocritical things used to seem when the Ministry of Defence was known as the War Office. And then, of course, there's replacing the Trident missile system.

According to the government, this is going to cost £29 billion; according to Greenpeace, the real cost is more likely to be £97 billion. Who are you going to believe? Well, far be it from me to influence you there. What we don't often hear, however, is that even in its current form, Trident has running costs of £2 billion per year. So what are we getting for our money?

Well, we're getting a supposedly "independent" nuclear deterrent, which is actually built and serviced in the United States, so we'd better not fall out with them or we'd be really stuck, wouldn't we? We're also getting a weapons system which is illegal under international law, being a weapon of mass destruction which fails to discriminate between military and civilian targets, and so is in direct contravention of the Geneva Convention, the Hague Convention, and several other conventions besides, all of which we have, of course, signed up to. You may recall that possession of such weapons was the very reason we were given for invading Iraq; the more astute of you may realise that this illegality applies to all nuclear weapons, everywhere (so you'll forgive me if I don't join in the general rejoicing about the USA and Russia agreeing to reduce their nuclear warheads to 1,550 each; that's still 3,100 completely illegal weapons, and enough to destroy the world many, many times over). And, ultimately, we're spending this vast amount of money on a weapons system that is, plainly, unusable. While the world might survive a limited number of nuclear explosions, each individual Trident missile contains 12 warheads. These are weapons that can only be used in a situation where complete annihilation inevitably follows, either because we are retaliating against another attack, or because our own will draw similar retaliation. We are, of course, horrified if a lone gunman runs amok, killing indiscriminately before shooting himself; what kind of stupidity is it to do this on an international scale?

So, here we are, coming through the worst financial crisis in decades, loaded with unimaginable debt, unable to support an ageing population and forced to cut back on health and education, while threatened with a global warming crisis that, if not tackled immediately, looks likely to result in the possible extinction of 95% of the human population of the planet. And in spite of that we're *still* increasing the amount of money we spend on weapons. I would say this is the politics of the lunatic asylum ... but, frankly, lunatics aren't that bloody stupid.

Obviously, some will argue that we need to be able to defend ourselves in a world of vanishing resources and climate-induced population movements; but this is a short-sighted viewpoint. Apart from being illegal, immoral and unaffordable, war is also a complete failure of the human imagination. In an increasingly dangerous world, we need to find new solutions to problems that don't include warfare. If we fear

terrorist attacks by religiously-motivated terrorists, we have to realise that fundamentalism, be it Islamic, Christian, Hindu or whatever, thrives among the poor, the disenfranchised and the under-educated, a problem which is only exacerbated by blowing innocent people into shreds of bloody flesh and bone. If our resources are vanishing, we need to find replacement energy sources and new manufacturing methods, rather than new ways of fighting over them. And, quite plainly, we need to develop economic and political systems that depend on cooperation, rather than competition. These are the sort of things we should be spending on; solve those problems and, in the long term, we can gradually diminish the need for war in the first place.

Ultimately, though, it needs more than this. We have to find some way of bringing about a cultural transformation whereby warfare is de-romanticised and military service is seen to be de-humanising. Life in the armed services is sold to potential recruits as an exciting opportunity for adventure, education and career-building. It's not. It's about killing people, and risking death in return. If that was made plain, perhaps those poor boys with no jobs and no prospects wouldn't keep coming home in boxes.

One obvious move toward achieving this would be to put in place a system of international law that actually holds the warmongers to account, rather than one that's simply overridden by the most powerful nations on the planet. From the trials at Nuremberg after World War II to the execution of Saddam Hussein, we basically have a system whereby "war crimes" are only attributed to the losers in a conflict, when quite plainly they're carried out by soldiers and politicians on both sides. Putting committed Christians like George W Bush and Tony Blair on trial as war criminals would be a positive first step in demonstrating that both the losers and the victors need to be held to account. *War itself* needs to be made a crime.

And in pointing out the Christianity of Bush and Blair, it wasn't my intention to attack their faith; merely their apparently hypocritical attitude to it. Personally, I don't have a lot of time for the Bible, but it does contain one commandment that I believe in absolutely. That's: "Thou shalt not kill." Not: "Thou shalt not kill unless the other guy's, like, *really evil*." Not: "unless it's a war situation." Not even: "except in self-defence." Just: "Thou shalt not kill." Full stop. No exceptions. No special pleading.

Thou shalt not kill.

It's been around for 3,000 years now, and it's about time we started paying attention to it ...

The Pain Principle

By Robin Ince

I don't have guilty pleasures. I decided to go for innocent agonies instead. Guilty pleasures seem a little too biblical for me; the agony of having fun, the pain of happiness, and so on¹. Anyway, aren't 'guilty pleasures' more of an alibi for genuinely liking something rubbish rather than a true sense of barbed wire hugging shame²?

Does a black dog hang over your head after eating an elaborate cake or dancing to Whigfield? Don't dance with the pretence of irony masking a true and genuine devotion to Europop³. Be proud that your record collection has both DJ Shadow's *Endtroducing* and Aqua's *Barbie Girl*⁴.

I have tried to rid myself of my innocent agony or petty pain, but just when I think I'm nearly there, the kraken awakes and tears at me again⁵.

My main masochistic penchant is for reading newspaper articles that I know will annoy me.

Do I do this to confirm arrogantly that I am right about something and most other people are idiots?

Am I addicted to the chemicals that brew in my body during bouts of impotent rage? Is it a last ditch pretence of being an angry young man when really I could be on the cusp of becoming a crazed old bigot with a Nigel Farage tattoo on my ankle?

I'm so close to kicking it.

Once I bought four newspapers a day, now I buy barely one a week. The newspapers have made this easier for me by becoming vehicles for opinion pieces and lifestyle supplements. Anyone who has seen my wardrobe or my haircut knows it's far too late to start creating a lifestyle. Should I start to dally with fashion now it would appear I have had / I'm on the verge of a nervous breakdown. I have also found it reasonably easy to form my own opinions without seeking the advice of Carol Malone or Tony Parsons, and if I can't conjure up an opinion I can always go to my barber for one.

Some people are still determined to ensure that I shouldn't get too happy, so they send me internet links knowing that I won't be able to resist⁶.

This is the sort of paragraph they know I'll be fond of.

"For example, Professor Richard Dawkins told me he was 'not necessarily averse' to the idea that life on earth had been created by a governing intelligence — provided that such an intelligence had arrived from another planet. How can it be that our pre-eminent apostle of reason appears to find little green men more plausible as an explanation for the origin of life than God?"

I have to agree, that does sound slightly insane. What on earth was Richard Dawkins thinking? It is good that a journalist dared to question this insanity from the presumed patriarch of the rational.

I was so worried that I wrote to Professor Dawkins. It seems he may have been misunderstood. An innocent mistake I am sure. It seems that the journalist Melanie Phillips had confused panspermia with the works of Eric Von Daniken⁷. This is what Richard Dawkins wrote about Melanie Phillips interpretation.

"What I actually said was that the idea that life on this planet had been placed there by some sort of intelligence was not totally ridiculous (and I was indeed thinking of directed panspermia, a la Orgel and Crick) provided the intelligence had ITSELF evolved by some sort of gradual evolutionary process. I personally don't think that happened, but the important point is that, either on this planet or another one, something as complex as life could only come about by gradual step-by-step incremental stages. Goddidit is not a respectable theory because it bypasses the need for explanation. My personal belief is that neither God nor an alien intelligence did it. I was bending over backwards to state the only possible conditions in which an intelligence of any kind might have done it. Far-fetched as it is, aliens from another planet are at least more plausible than a god that just happened, without explanation."

This is the other reason that I have had to try and kick newspapers, it takes me thirty minutes to read them and then the rest of the day to research and find out how much is true. A comedian, I think it was the wonderful Adam Bloom, used to joke that he enjoyed watching Channel 5 news, but then had to turn over to the BBC to find out how much of it was true. Sadly, I don't possess this level of trust. Even a BBC bulletin can lead to a bout of investigation to assuage my doubt.

Once I finally rid myself of the obelisk of newspaper reading, what have I got left to fill the allotted inane hours of the day?

¹ Sorry, not having a go at religion, just always had a bit of a downer on it after I found out that I came out of the womb sinful, though that did at least cushion the blow when I actually started actively being sinful with impure thoughts of Susan George and thieving of Dr Who books.

² The best cinematic use of barbed wire as masochism is in John Huston's *Wise Blood*.

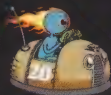
³ I would like to make it clear that I do not hold a hidden candle for Europop but I did like Cyndi Lauper's *She's So Unusual*.

⁴ Aqua's *Dr Jones* made me laugh contentedly when it was on *Top of the Pops*, it was the "Baby I am missing you" moment.

⁵ I'm not very good on mythology, so apologies if krakens don't tear, I don't even know why I'm thinking of krakens today. You go seventeen years without thinking of one, then all of a sudden, bloody krakens everywhere in your head.

⁶ The most recent one was this from the *Spectator* - <http://www.melaniephillips.com/articles-new/?p=734> now you can be all grumpy too.

⁷ No footnote required



In my twenties I allowed myself to enjoy the Jess Franco rubbish released by Redemption films⁸, repeats of Dusty Bin's 3-2-1, Holiday on the Buses⁹ and the Something Weird catalogue of Argentinean mad scientist space invader sex kidnap drama films.¹⁰ As my thirties started to droop my chin and loosen my hair, I found it harder and harder to just switch off and enjoy an afternoon of kitsch or crap. The shelves that once kept Samuel Z Arkoff in place were wiped down and filled with the sort of films I feared in my youth, existential dramas about faithless priests and vivacious women cursed with melancholy. I still watched Reform School Girl or The Amazing Colossal Man, but the guilt far outweighed the pleasure. After these few billions of years that it's taken to gain self-consciousness, it seemed a bit cheeky to "switch off". I don't think it's made me a better person, but it also hasn't made me any happier living a life without the Z grade flick.

There is still one weakness as glaring as a Sontaran neckhole¹¹ and that is cheap literature liberated from the charity shops and jumble sales of Britain.

The books of Guy N Smith and Mills and Boon and Eric Von Daniken are the closest I come to having a guilty pleasure, but whatever the people may say and however many brickbats are thrown, I refuse to be guilty when reading Crabs on the Rampage or Vets at Cross Purposes. You should see the looks a middle-aged man gets on public transport if he's reading romantic fiction such as Where the Wolf Leads or The Greek Tycoon's Disobedient Bride.

It began in Notting Hill, in the sort of junk shop that should be run by Peter Cushing and which sells antiques with a morality tale and the threat of soul trapped in limbo. There was a book called The Stag Movie Review. It had no ISBN and therefore stank of criminality. Written by HC Selby, it was a rigorously researched compendium of one reel porno flick reviews. Films examined included The Locksmith, Tootsie's Party and Two-some Part 8. It was the fulsome description of Teenage Orgy that particularly caught my eye.

"Two couples sit on a sofa, clothed and conversing. All appear to be in their teens. Both boys are tall and lean. A very cute raven haired girl is on the left, a taller blonde on the right. With boys on each end."

Selby is aware that the feng shui of the performers is vital to the stag movie aficionado's enjoyment.

Selby continues by describing the clothes, which include Sports slacks, mini skirts and matching sweaters, the quest for detail approaches Brett Easton Ellis's relentless reeling off of labels in American Psycho. Eventually some sex happens. Again, detail is vital, amongst the cries of "oh my" and "ummm gosh" there is this.

"Her labia are not long, but well-defined, not flappy like many girls of her stature"

Five more pages are taken up with "serpentine reaches", "rapid strokes" and "frowns as it splashes on her lap". The author, still unsure if the copious description won't be enough to woo the lusty stag party to purchase, offers a critique.

"The couples are attractive, and the room where it was made was rather well-furnished. The television set is English"

That's the deal sealed then.

Once I had purchased that, my eyes spent less time scanning the spines in the philosophy and science sections, and more time in the bargain basements where the old copies of Which and Blitz magazine were stacked next to the books that smelled of yellow. For a year or more, while Madame Bovary remained unopened, Crabs on the Rampage, Locusts, What Would Jesus Eat? The Secrets of Picking Up Sex Girls, What God Does When Women Pray and Which One's Cliff, the autobiography of Cliff Richard, were rattled through.

I would stand on stage declaiming –

"Hungry, seductive death beckoned from the black depths of the sucking pit".

Or

"Blood spurted from the wrist stump, a scarlet salute to the king of crabs, rich wine spurting into the wizened, lusting face"

Or even

"Long nails may indicate to many men that the woman is unwilling to do household chores and is unavailable for recreational activities"

Those are from Guy N. Smith's The Walking Dead, Guy N. Smith's Crabs on the Rampage and Margaret Kent's How to Marry The Man of Your Choice, in that order I think.

But even this joy wore off and I realised that I must return to proper books about things, safe in the knowledge that if giant crabs did eventually appear from the sea at Barmouth, I would know enough to fight them off.¹³

Now that I've written a book about it all, I think my final alibi for the love of tat is gone and need to read about angry self-conscious ants is vaporised. Is it a good thing? With a rise in the United Kingdom of charlatan bamboozlers peddling fictions as fact or falling for spin from corporate bodies masquerading as independent citizens, don't I have a duty to attempt to be informed on issues of importance? I don't want my son living in a world that looks like the set of The Omega Man, Panic in Year Zero, or worse, a world overtaken by Orang-utans after an ill-thought out Eastern European circus experiment. But, will my actions make a blind bit of difference? Won't I just end up more miserable and as pointless? Oh well, I'll give it a go anyway. Now what would Slavoj Zizek do in this situation? Something much smarter than me is the answer.

⁸ Master of the slow pan and zoom onto exterior of ominous, hungry lesbian castle, perhaps you have seen Bare Breasted Countess AKA Female Vampire

⁹ For younger readers, this concerned the adventures of a bus driver in his late fifties who tried to have sex with teenagers, it was a bit like the Peter O'Toole film Venus but with swanee whistles and frillier knickers.

¹⁰ I'm thinking specifically of The Curious Dr Hump

¹¹ I've never felt the urge to write Sontaran neck hole before, today was the day.

¹² As two-some parts 1 to 7 are not included, perhaps the book is less rigorous than I first thought.

¹³ I blame Blue Peter, I was watching that when I first realised how short life was. I was eight and had just learnt about fractions. John Noakes was talking about the year 2000. Crikey I'll be 31 I thought. Then I did some maths in my head and realised I was already one ninth of the way through my life. Nothing has been the same since.



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NORTHAMPTON EDITION



Catholic church launches reward card

What do points make? Piety!



Emily Veganburger
Rome

Catholics have always been able to seek *sacramental absolution* – having years knocked off purgatory by making pilgrimages to holy places, or walking through certain blessed church doors.

But now the church has given it a modern spin by introducing their own religious reward card. Believers can collect points via swipe machines installed in various holy places, with 100 points earning one year off purgatory.

Yesterday a group ascended Rome's holy steps on their knees whilst praying, as is the tradition.

There they were greeted by a nun who swiped their cards, crediting them with the relevant amount of 'piety points'.

The cards also keep track of your sins; users swipe-in when entering the confessional, and can later update the cards after performing the required number of Hail Marys. Special offers, such as '50 extra points for attending communion', are advertised on the website and at local churches.

Finally, at death, a person's time

'Worshippers can collect piety points from the holy swipe machines.'

in purgatory is calculated during a solemn religious ceremony inspired by 1980s game show *The Crystal Maze*; silver and gold pieces of paper, representing sins and absolutions, are blown around inside the glass dome of the Popemobile, then collected and added up by Richard O'Brien.

Some critics have complained that the scheme trivialises the church's sacred traditions. Others say it's a nice distraction from all the child abuse.

But for now at least, the chance of acquiring the revered 10,000 points and a 'get out of Hell free' gold card has increased attendance at churches worldwide. ■

Noel's 'Are You Harder Than a Ten-Year Old?'
The controversial new game show
Television



Lashings and ginger beer!
The rise of Enid Blyton fetish clubs
Society



Just what the doctor ordered!
Hugh Laurie launches his own wine label
Food & Drink



Technology

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Accidentally insulted the bride at a wedding?
facePalm!

Hit 'send' on an email and immediately regretted it?
facePalm!

Told the girlfriend she could lose a few pounds?
facePalm!



Ever noticed how people have a habit of slapping their forehead after making a stupid mistake? Well, that's where we implant your **facePalm** button!

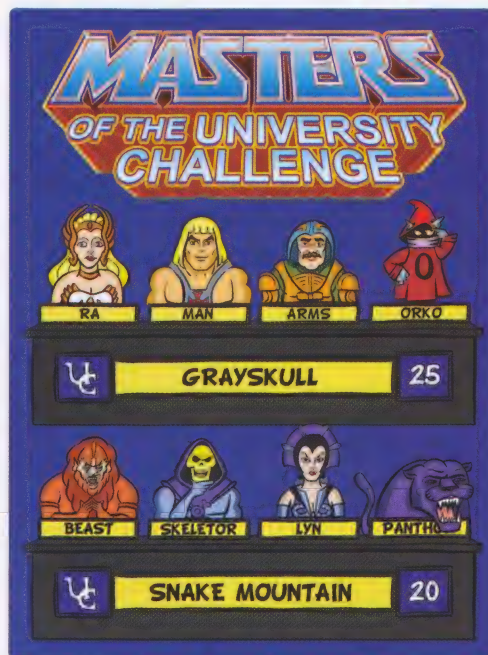
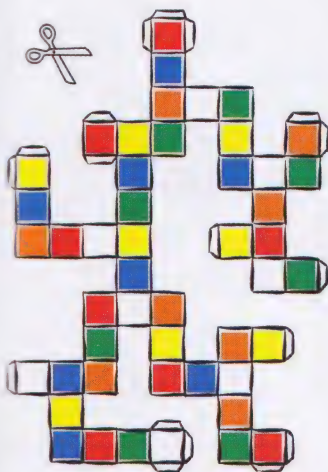
It's as if all human evolution has been leading up to this moment.

Note: The facePalm is powered by tachyon energy that is a by-product of the Large Hadron Collider. Each undo requires 7 trillion electronvolts. Please do not use near heavy machinery or animal/plant life.

Warning: Hitting the facePalm undo button more than three times in a row may damage reality. Please do not attempt to travel back 30 years and change your career or marriage as this may tear a hole in the space-time continuum.

Puzzle corner

Rubik's Cube cut-out



“From an early age, I became aware of a shadowy power ruling the world from behind the scenes. I called it the *looming auntie*.”

Continuing our exclusive excerpts from *Derring Dos & Don'ts*, the memoirs of Col D John Coleman

Weekend magazine



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RAVEN OF SOULS

BY SAVAGE
PENCIL
+ DAVID
QUANTICK



SO YOU'VE DECIDED TO REJECT CIVILIZATION

BY MARGARET KILLJOY

Congratulations! You've decided to reject civilisation! There are so many reasons why you might have done so. Maybe you've watched so many post-apocalypse movies or read so many books and comics that you really wish the world would hurry up and end so you can get on with living, as you'd like to.

Maybe you've intellectually come to understand the horrors of the modern political system, and have determined that its roots run all the way back to when some folks started locking up food and only gave it out in exchange for labour.

Maybe you've looked at the world around you and decided that the monstrous evils being perpetuated against the natural earth really are unforgivable, and the complex of societies that has allowed that to happen ought to be destroyed—or at best ignored.

Maybe you just like harvesting wild food but don't see why we have to give up living in cities. Whatever your reasoning, we're quite happy to have you in the ranks of the post-civilised.

A few suggestions:

Examine your surroundings. See what resources are available for your use, and plan accordingly.

Actively recycle and reuse everything.

Eschew money. If a problem can be solved without money, don't use it.

Find your people. Work with them. Network with other groups.

Specialise in one or two skills that you can offer. Generalise in a ton of skills.

This information is known to be applicable in the United States and is generally true of other "developed" nations. Much of it is applicable elsewhere throughout the world, but certainly, the post-civilised must adopt different tactics in different bio-regions.

Food:

Food? If you're in the "developed" world, food is the easy part. And when I say "easy part," I mean, "thing that will supplant all other desires in your brain and potentially consume a great portion of your time." But compared to shelter or health care, getting food is easy.

There is food everywhere. Even in the cities, there are wild edibles: the last place where I lived, we ate dandelion greens (get young leaves, steam them and change the water once), clover (eat it right off the ground), acorns (soak the tannins out by leaving them in a running creek for a few days—or boil in a few changes of water—then grind into flour), and various nuts like chestnuts. Ornamental oranges can be made into marmalade. Mesquite pods can be ground into flour. Many people with fruit trees in their yards usually don't mind or notice if you glean, and it rarely hurts to ask. If you eat meat, there's road kill. In the city, you'll find squirrels and cats. Outside the city, you'll find a lot larger and tastier animals. You have to be careful with road kill, of course. Eat freshly killed animals, and learn how to prepare them for eating from somewhere that isn't this article. I don't touch the stuff, I am vegan.

Then there's the garbage. People throw away food all of the time. For the purposes of the urban forager, there are essentially two varieties: dumpstered and left-overs. If you head on over to the dumpster behind any given grocery store, you'll find food in the trash pretty much every night. The trick to eating dumpstered food is to figure out why it was thrown away. Sometimes food is tossed because it's past its expiration date: if so, you can usually smell it to see if it's gone bad. Look for puffy lids as a sign that food might actually not be edible. Sometimes food gets thrown away because the box is torn, or because one glass jar of sauce broke and they threw away the whole box of jars. Bruised produce is common, as are ripe bananas. When you eat dumpstered food, you often get food in bulk; it's good to have a system to distribute this bounty to your friends. What else are you going to do with 40 gallons of orange juice? Remember to wash your hands before you eat anything. You could wear gloves, but then other dumpster-divers might make fun of you.



Dumpstering is sometimes illegal, depending on where you are, and often the best food is thrown out at the end of the night. But if you're wandering around hungry during the day, you can swallow your pride and dig through trashcans on the street corner. If a half-eaten falafel sounds good to you (and it does to me), then you might as well eat it. I find it best to just take from the top of the trashcan, and to look out for contamination.

A lot—but certainly not all—of the post-civilised also shoplift food, usually from larger, corporate stores. Universal morality is one of the things that we'll be glad to get rid of as we abandon civilisation: instead, we have our individual ethical codes.

And finally, there's guerrilla gardening. Grow food in every available bit of green space. Even if you don't eat it yourself, whoever does will thank you.

Clothing:

Wear whatever you want. This should be true all the time, of course, but it so rarely is. Civilised people just don't dress like they're extras in a Mad Max movie. (Which is a damn shame!) Civilised people are really concerned with what other people might think about what they wear.

The important thing about thinking outside the box is: well, if you're only thinking *outside* the box, you're still not thinking within the full range of possibilities. Don't be strange just to be strange: Be strange because it's who you are. Or hell, wear suit and tie. People get so caught up about clothes. If you're looking to fit in with the civilised, it shouldn't be hard. People are throwing away and giving away clothes all of the time. But while it's useful to be able to camouflage yourself, it's often a strong desire for the aesthetic of re-use and re-appropriation that draws us away from civilisation in the first place. If society, and its conventions, didn't exist, what would you wear? What would you look like? What's available to incorporate into this garb?

Dental floss makes wonderful thread, as does sinew, as does, well, thread. Once you start looking through the trash, you'll never run short of materials to work with.

Shelter:

Finding or making shelter is sometimes difficult. The civilised put a lot of stock into owning land, which they call "property" and seek to privatise. In most countries, it's perfectly legal (despite being remarkably rude) to own vacant buildings, preventing anyone else from using them without actually doing anything with them themselves.

Fortunately, the post-civilised don't put much stock in law—though we're smart enough to know that other folks do—and squatting abandoned buildings is certainly an ethical thing to do.

Squatting is complicated and contextual, with few situations being quite the same. But if I may be rude and generalise, there are two types of squatters: Squatters who build up the places that they live in, turning them into fantastical wonderlands of potential; and squatters who piss in the corner and generally turn the place to shit.

The point of dropping out of civilisation isn't to pass out drunk every night (though it isn't so hard to brew your own alcohol!), it's to liberate ourselves and present to the world a more complex, diverse, and natural way of living.

Another time-honoured tradition is to find a bit of wood and build a shack, usually of repurposed and recycled materials.

Some opt to compromise and buy or rent, usually living in high density so as to keep prices down. Shacks get built on rental properties; lofts get built in the living room, etc.

Wait a second!

"Aren't you just parasitising something that you claim to be against if you live off of civilisation's discards? Aren't you as tied into and dependent on consumerism as someone who goes out and just buys the stuff?"

Of course, if you want to look at it that way. But we're not talking about simple (and respectable!) freeganism. We're talking about living post-civilised. In *any* given context, we're going to look around ourselves and see what's available. Right now, there's a hell of a lot. After the collapse, things are going to look a whole lot different.

Generalise and Specialise:

Being independent is a wonderful thing. But having people on whom you can rely is finer still. So learn how to take care of yourself: Grow, find, and cook food; repair your own clothes, tools, and toys; learn about health, first aid, and first-response emergency care; learn how to fight, at least enough to knock someone down and run; learn how consensus decision making works. Hell, there's lots to learn.

But you don't need to master every single skill. People get so caught up in how specialisation is either wonderful (say the civilised) or oppressive (say the primitivists) without really pausing to consider that generalisation and specialisation don't need to compete.

Everyone ought to know to take garlic in their tea if they're getting sick, but for the full range of mental and physical ailments that can be treated herbally? You need a specialist. And while one person specialises in that, someone else is going to keep making antibiotics (there is nothing that the civilised know that we cannot learn).

Personally? I'm not going to spend all of my time learning how to design perma-cultured gardens. But I'll sure volunteer when it's time for harvest.

Next issue: *After the collapse.*



TALES FROM PHONOGRAPHIC OCEANS... TAKE A DIP... PART2 BY ALEX NOVAK

SPIKE JONES (1911-1965)

Born in California USA, the young LINDLEY JONES got his nickname from his railroad agent father who said he was as thin as a rail spike. SPIKE had played drums from the age of 11 and was subsequently introduced to the idea of playing pots and pans by a railroad chef - here began his fascination for using unusual items as musical instruments.

He became a percussionist for an orchestra where he remained until 1942 - playing on BING CROSBY'S 'WHITE CHRISTMAS' before forming his own outfit the CITY SLICKERS.

During a musicians' strike in 1942, which only allowed recordings for radio, he scored a broadcast hit with the song 'DER FUEHRER'S FACE'. Ridiculing HITLER by subverting the Nazi salute with a disrespectful raspberry noise, the line 'HEIL (RAZZBERRY), HEIL (RAZZBERRY), RIGHT IN DER FUEHRER'S FACE!' was just what the public wanted to hear.

The original inspiration came from WALT DISNEY'S 'DONALD DUCK IN NUTZI LAND', a WORLD WAR II propaganda cartoon, which was retitled to match the song when it was a hit.

Comical satire was SPIKE JONES forte - taking original songs and adding his unique twist - like the remodelling of the romantic ballad 'COCKTAILS FOR TWO' into an off-kilter lunatic tribute to the cocktail hour.

SPIKE'S music and comedy certainly inspired the likes of THE BONZO DOO-DAH BAND, FRANK ZAPPA, MONTY PYTHON, THE GOONS and dare I say it: THE BARRON KNIGHTS.

One of his songs 'ALL I WANT FOR CHRISTMAS IS MY TWO FRONT TEETH' (a hit in 1948) was parodied by DORA BRYAN in the Fab Four themed 'ALL I WANT FOR CHRISTMAS IS A BEATLE' in 1963.

He got his own radio show on NBC until 1949 and it included an eclectic group of guests from GROUCHO MARX, FRANK SINATRA to LASSIE. To get away from the 'crazy' music tag, he formed a serious orchestra, but the public preferred the CITY SLICKERS. They fared better on the new medium of television, where there spontaneous outbursts and their visual gags secured them spots on the COLGATE COMEDY HOUR, FOUR STAR REVUE and his own SPIKE JONES SHOW (1954-61).

THE CITY SLICKERS appeared in many films, mainly as the novelty act, including 'THANK YOUR LUCKY STARS', 'VARIETY GIRL' and SPIKE'S only starring role in a comedy 'FIREMAN, SAVE MY CHILD'. The advent of Rock & Roll gave SPIKE the problem of how exactly to parody it - breaking a taboo of the era, he managed to show the bottom half of ELVIS PRESLEY for the first time on television - he had a dwarf hide in a pair of trousers. Inspired.

During the 50s there was a change as comedy moved away from musical satire towards the spoken word, 'DINNER MUSIC FOR PEOPLE WHO AREN'T VERY HUNGRY' was the last CITY SLICKERS record.

A lifelong smoker - a factor contributing to his deteriorating health - SPIKE died at the age of 53.

Recommended listening;

DINNER MUSIC FOR PEOPLE WHO AREN'T VERY HUNGRY LP (VERVE 1957).

SPOOKTAKULAR SOUND LP (WB4004 1960)

SIXTY YEARS OF MUSIC AMERICA HATES (BEST OF) LP (LONDON HAG2298 1961).

THANK YOU MUSIC LOVERS LP (RCA RD7724 1965)
BEST OF SPIKE JONES AND HIS CITY SLICKERS CD (1993)

TIGHTS

From Worcester, their first two singles launched the independent label CHERRY RED on to the world. The TIGHTS minimal DIY electronics and atmospheric post-punk had parallels with the likes of GLAXO BABIES and CLOCK DVA. 'CHINA'S ETERNAL' appeared on the compilation LP BUSINESS UNUSUAL, a round up of independent releases (CHERRY RED ARED2) in 1979, both 45s appear on CHERRY RED PUNK SINGLES COLLECTION CD (ANAGRAM CDPUNK51) in 1995.

Apparently after X amount of years they have released a new album 'TV WORK AND BED' which straddles post-punk/gothic overtones and modern melodic mood pieces even covering RAMONES 'POISON HEART'.

Recommended;
BAD HEARTS/IT/CRACKED 7" (CHERRY RED CHERRY1 1978).
HOWARD HUGHES/CHINA'S ETERNAL 7" (CHERRY RED CHERRY2 1978)



BUBBLEGUM SLUT FANZINE/UK No.36

'Built on rock'n'roll rebellion, of the moment, excess and the perception of immortality that goes with it, when tomorrow, never mind the ten year plan, just does not exist' ALISON B/EDITOR

As ever an eclectic issue, with the obligatory furry heart on the cover, this issue features the SLITS, BAI BANG, ANDREW CZEZOWSKI & SUSAN CARRINGTON (Club owners/promoters at the ROXY, FRIDGE, F.A.K.E), PRETTY BOY FLOYD, GLITTERATI, LA DEATHROCK, BARRACUDAS, WALTER LURE (HEARTBREAKERS), KID CONGO POWERS (GUNCLUB/CRAMPS/BAD SEEDS), CATWOMAN, VOICE OF THE BEEHIVE plus plenty of album, comic, live reviews
myspace.com/bubblegumslutzone



AMBOY DUKES

Not to be confused with the UK band with the same name who had a hit with 'JUDY IN DISGUISE', AMBOY DUKES are responsible for launching the dubious talents of TED NUGENT (rock guitarist/hunter) onto the unsuspecting natural world.

Formed in Detroit USA around NUGENT in 1966, they were a typical garage band of the era, mixing Rock & Roll and R&B with British bands like THE STONES, THEM and THE KINKS.

The stand out track from this period was the re-working of THEM'S 'BABY PLEASE DONT GO' which was a US radio hit. By 1968 they moved away from garage rock to self-conscious hippie pop, and managed to score a hit with both a single and album titled 'JOURNEY TO THE CENTRE OF THE MIND'.

Subsequent material did not get the same attention - line up changes followed and there was a shift towards harder rock via MC5, THE STOOGES, and then into heavy rock as they entered the 70s. A hard gigging band, however NUGENT still found time to enter and reach the national finals of a squirrel shooting contest. By 1975 he had gained a management contract and begun his career as a solo heavy metal artist. His controversial interest in blood sports got him onto TV and he even opened his own restaurant called RED MEAT (RED NECK might have been a better name).



Recommended;

JOURNEYS AND MIGRATIONS (BEST OF) 2xLP (MAINSTREAM 1973)

Collectables;

LET'S GO GET STONED/IT'S NOT TRUE 7" (FONTANA TF971 1968). AMBOY DUKES LP (FONTANA (S)TL5468 1967)
JOURNEY TO THE CENTER OF THE MIND LP (LONDON HA-T/SH-T8378 1969). MIGRATION LP (LONDON HA-T/SH-T8392 1969)
TOOTH FANG AND CLAW LP(DISCREET DS2203 1974)

SPIZZ

Formed in London 1977 as one man DIY punk act, SPIZZ made his debut at BARBARELLAS PUNK FESTIVAL in Birmingham, he then linked up with guitarist PETE PETROL to form SPIZZ 77.

FRANK GUEST was added on drums, and this completed the line up for SPIZZ OIL who went on to record a session for JOHN PEEL and was the first act to sign to GEOFF TRAVIS'S ROUGH TRADE label. The template of bare bones futuristic punk was fully formed with the advent of SPIZZ ENERGI in 1979, best remembered for the novelty indie hit 'WHERE'S CAPTAIN KIRK?' in 1980. Name changes have been in SPIZZ'S blood, so when A&M signed them, the name changes followed from ATHLETICO SPIZZ CO. to ATHLETICO SPIZZ 80, then SPIZZLES for a while, then back to SPIZZ ENERGI for two further singles for ROUGH TRADE. He continues to gig in one guise or another, but with the ever present SPIZZ...

SPIZZ OIL

6000 CRAZY/1989/FIBRE 7" (ROUGH TRADE RTS01 1979) COLD CITY/RED AND BLACK/SOLARISATION /PLATFORM 3 7" (ROUGH TRADE RTS02 1979) PEEL SESSION 12" (STRANGE FRUIT SFPS022 1987)

SPIZZ ENERGI

SOLDIER SOLDIER/VIRGINIA PLAIN 7" (ROUGH TRADE RTS03 1979)
WHERE'S CAPTAIN KIRK?/AMNESIA 7" (ROUGH TRADE RTS04 1979)
MEGA CITY 3/WORK 7" (ROUGH TRADE RTS06 1982)
JUNGLE FEVER/MEANING 7" (ROUGH TRADE RTS07 1982)

ATHLETICO SPIZZ 80

NO ROOM/SPOCK'S MISSING 7" (ROUGH TRADE RTS05 1980) HOT DESERTS/LEGAL PROCEEDINGS 7" (A&M AMS7550 1980). DO A RUNNER LP (A&M AMLE68514 1980)
ENTRAL PARK/DUB 7" (A&M AMS7566 1980)

SPIZZLES

RISK/MELANCHOLY 7" (A&M AMS8107 1981). DANGER OF LIVING/SCARED 7" (A&M AMS8124 1981)
SPIKEY DREAM FLOWERS LP (A&M AMLE68523 1981)

SPIZZ

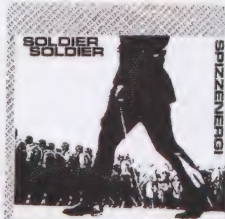
LOVE ME LIKE A ROCKET 12" (PLASTIC HEAD PLASPOP2 1988)

Recommended;

SPIZZ HISTORY LP (ROUGH TRADE ROUGHS01 1983).
SPIZZ NOT DEAD SHOCK 1978-1988 CD (CHERRY RED 1996/2002)

contact;

alex@spiralarchive.com
myspace.com/spiralarchiverecords



What's Her Problem?



By Deborah Delano

It's a funny old world in which to be a middle-aged lesbian teacher. With so many cultural shifts and false dichotomies to deceive and confuse, it's sometimes hard to remember who your enemies are, and, harder still, your friends.

The Conservative party for example, suddenly creepily keen to get loved-up with us queers when just a couple of years back they were screwing us (uninvited) up the arse, legislating against homosexuals to maintain the odious Section 28. So it's difficult not to doubt the total sincerity of recent diplomacy.

For younger readers: Section 28 was legislation introduced by Margaret Thatcher's Conservative government in 1988 to ban the "promotion" of homosexuality, while describing lesbian and gay families as "pretended". Practically, this caused AIDS charities and help-lines to close down through lack of funding—but, more pernicious, it imposed on scared teachers a twenty-year embargo on discussion of any aspect of "gayness".

Here, and elsewhere in this article, I use "gay" to include lesbian, gay, transgender, and any sexual shade between, because it's too much of a bleeding mouthful to prefix everything with a string of politically endorsed labels. So my radical lesbian detractors will just have to humour me, and swallow.

And what's to be said of New Labour? Well, they did repeal Section 28 and introduced civil partnership and gay adoption. They couldn't, of course, go as far as calling it marriage—that would undermine the very language of oppression. Nor would they insist that the church should recognise or respect such unions, preferring to preserve the superstitious primitivism of institutional religion. Catholics, who find repellent the idea of gays adopting children can ignore the law with impunity—as, it appears, can child-friendly former-Cardinal Ratzinger's international tradition of paedophile priests and other lay abusers.

Not that Islam gets any kind of pass. On the one hand, it's apparent that Islam teaches hatred and loathing of gays. Unlike the Bible, the Qur'an explicitly denounces homosexuality—so fundamentalist Muslims would happily stone me to death, while the moderates simply despise me and wish me an eternity burning in Hell (wherever the fuck that is).

Yet on the other hand, at least Islamophobia has overtaken homophobia at number one in the prejudice parade. Gays are no longer up there with the big time bogeymen—our evil disco dancing perceived as not quite the same deadly threat as the bearded young man on the bus with a rucksack.

The problem with this newfound tolerance (and what a limp-wristed concept that is) and these shiny new attitudes from our politicians is that, as we gain acceptance, our sense of community seems to falter, as if becoming redundant. The gay scenes in our major cities are tourist traps and, while once in so many of our pubs and clubs a political unity could also be detected, now just the throbbing sexual appetite remains. I visited Old Compton Street with my girlfriend a few weeks ago, looking in vain it transpired, for a quiet drink in a friendly place. The first thing we noticed was the absence of the rainbow flags that used to embellish all the shops and clubs—casualties, apparently, of health and safety by-laws. Nostalgia took us to a bar we used to frequent, grateful for its sofas and chilled music. Unfortunately it was under new management: a sign informed us it had "just got sexier". So the chilled music was now high NRG at ear-bursting decibel levels, accompanied by plasma screens from which glistening young men thrust their high-definition bits at us. The sofas were still there, but given the new 'sexiness' we thought twice about sinking into them for fear of getting jism on our jeans.

Homosexuality is not just about sex. Unless we can have our all of queerness, our love, our history, our art, our presence in every community in the world—in short, our contribution to humanity acknowledged in its entirety, then we're nowhere. We've just allowed the continuing sexualisation of our lives to be seen as progress. It is nothing of the sort. This notion that being gay is about who you shag is one thrust upon us by 19th century quacks, who sought to medicalise, and categorise us with the language of oppression. We are not these phoney labels "homosexual", "lesbian", "invert" or, to use the more colourful language of the street, "arse bandit", "muff diver" and "shit stabber". The "we" of whom I count myself part are those kindred spirits who love freely and without judgement, and who seek a world where peace and love are not recalled only in half-embarrassed reference to some regretted folly of youth.



Anyway, even in this tolerant and accepting 21st century western democracy, police records show a 10% rise in homophobic hate crime—and while some of that increase is dismissed as statistical variation due to increased reporting, etc., it is disturbing that the violence and ferocity of these crimes have increased. So, let's not get too comfy with the wholesome smiling face of "tolerance". We're still getting the shit kicked out of us.

When I came out as gay in 1979 – Thatcher's "year zero" – I could pretty much assume I was outcast from society. There was no valid expectation of "tolerance" in that world—so for me it was a short cut to ridding those around me of any idea that I would ever participate in the life mapped out for me as a working-class girl raised on the Spencer estate in the 'sixties. Northamptonians will understand the implications of that heritage. For others, Spencer, so named for the illustrious and ancient Spencer family of Althorpe, who had bequeathed the land for the purpose of building a large estate of council houses, was then becoming notorious as the habitat of petty-criminals and "incest families".

The estate's undeniable social problems were exemplified by a local, caught with heroin taped underneath his penis. At the time I was too young to understand if the approbation felt locally was to do with the heroin or the penis—I'm still not sure. Much later, in the 'nineties, his translucently beautiful sister threw herself from the railway bridge, dying twenty minutes later from a double leg amputation—there but for the grace of god, etc. One family was unusual, in that, the man of the household was both father and grandfather to little be-whiskered dependant. Our house backed onto the lair of a huge, violent family of drunkards, two sons of which were, along with six others, later convicted for kicking a homeless person to death in the Racecourse toilets. None received more than two years: The police who gave evidence, and the judge, were fully empathetic with the fears of these young thugs that the old man was a homosexual who had propositioned them. So in terms of life chances, there wasn't much on offer for me. I could have become a junkie but, though tempted to flirt with the opportunity, had too much instinct for self-preservation to seriously pursue that career.

In my confusion, aged eighteen, in 1977 I married a man. Of course I knew in my heart I was gay, but nothing in my experience back then suggested that this was a viable life-option. Marriage was my last-ditch attempt to prove I was "normal"—the height of self-delusion as, whatever I was, it was certainly far from that. A fact reinforced by the GP I had begun consulting after my parents insisted I leave school at sixteen.

I was desperate to remain in education in order to become a journalist—but mum and dad needed the boost to the housekeeping my wages would bring, so I found myself miserably employed as a Council receptionist instead. I hated my job and began inventing symptoms and illnesses to get out of it. I visited my local doctor regularly for sick notes and, quickly realising that my physical health was good, he questioned me about my life in general—showed a novel interest in me that my naive self found deeply flattering. I confessed, among other things, that I smoked dope and was seriously attracted to girls. To this last he replied that I was "far too pretty".



Once, I had a late appointment and he sent the receptionist home, leaving us alone in the building. He stood behind me as we talked and began to massage my shoulders. I was terrified—and horribly disappointed. I had sincerely thought he found me interesting. I asked him to stop: he angrily and abruptly called our consultation to a close, explaining that I would thereafter see his colleague, a psychiatric specialist.

I protested: There was nothing wrong with me. He insisted that I collect a letter of referral from the surgery next day, and take it to the hospital appointment. In it, he described me as “paranoid schizophrenic”. Consenting to sex with him would have been much simpler—and infinitely less damaging.

My appointment was a week later. When I arrived my GP was waiting to accompany me to the interview. He and the psychiatrist were clearly old mates and they found my dope smoking and my sexuality to be grave causes for concern, advising that I agree to a stay in St. Crispin's (the local looney bin) and that failure to do so would result in my being sectioned. This was 1975. Homosexuality was still listed in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Illnesses.

I told my parents that I was going on holiday to the Lake District with Keith (the man I later married). Instead, on a chilly February morning, I was admitted to St. Crispin's. I was certain that as soon as I explained to the staff that there'd been a terrible mistake, the whole silly mess would be cleared up. The more I protested my sanity, however, the less convinced they were of it.

A hard-faced matron informed me that a doctor could only discharge me, and they only visited on Tuesday and Friday mornings. This was Friday afternoon and to a frightened kid of 17, Tuesday seemed a lifetime away.

I rejected an array of prescribed pills. I knew enough about drugs to know I'd need to be straight to get through this ordeal. Each night, one of the women on my ward would jump on my bed exposing her withered loins and genitals. Only once did a staff-member answer my shout for help—and she berated me for not taking my sleeping medication. Other patients were kindly and understood my plight. Just as Rosenhan showed in his famous experiment, lunatics in the asylum recognised mental health long before the “experts” ever did.

On Sunday, my mum and dad came to visit. The ‘good’ doctor had ignored my request not to tell them, making a home visit to inform my shocked parents that their daughter was in the Mad House because their failure to recognise my academic potential had caused me enormous psychological problems. Nice, Doc! Chastened, they offered to scrimp so I could go to college. I said “maybe”—but by this time I lacked the self-esteem required to imagine a future. Tuesday came and I joined the queue to see the discharging psychiatrist. Four hours later he left: I was still two from the front of the queue. A lot of fragile human spirit gets eroded in four days. Friday morning I was first in line.

I understood now that compliance and gratitude were essential pre-requisites for release, and ensured these were well represented in my presentation—along with a seasoning of somewhat lurid sexual fantasy. And thus, cured, I was discharged from that repository for the casualties of late-modern Capitalist patriarchy.

Just a few weeks ago I was visiting friends Northampton and as I came into town along the A45, close to the old mental hospital, I noticed giant billboards. A smiling couple happy commuters beamed down at motorists they were enjoying life in the fast lane at the area's new luxury apartments. It struck me that the developers must have been from out of town.

After this ordeal, I was fully cognisant of my abnormality. And I foolishly married a foolish young man in a ridiculous attempt to maintain a heterosexual charade. It lasted about 18 months, until I discovered the Princess Royal and therein others like me. I was quickly devoured by hungry dykes; starved of fresh young flesh. Though this did not quench my thirst for love, I knew that I'd found home. I told Keith I was a lezzie and left him vomiting into the sink of our conjugal home as I went out the door. Brass in Pocket was number one that Christmas and my heart was bursting with joy.



Entering the world of teaching in 1995 was a major culture shock. Since 1979 I'd been completely out. I relished being gay and took every available opportunity to shove it down people's throats. In schools there are a precious few openly gay people: I am still the only gay teacher, I know, who is out to the students. I find this an incredible reminder of the levels of prejudice that still exist in our wonderfully tolerant new society. So, fifteen years ago, I was suddenly thrust amongst a culture of kids, who wore their homophobia as a badge of honour and had their hatred enshrined in law. I worked in a tough, multi-cultural school in the borough of Newham. As in most London schools there was a good proportion of gay staff, but none of them was open with the kids. The very idea of coming out to students was thought to be insane and, most likely, career suicide. Nonetheless the butch dykes and bitchy queens I counted among my mates on the staff did give me the support I needed to make that step, even though I know they feared that it might somehow expose them too. I gave myself a year to build relationships with the kids, and then informed the head of my intention. To his credit he offered to support me, though his hunted expression betrayed his fears—namely Muslim parents and my line manager, the Head of R.E., whom was a fundamentalist Christian. She taught the kids that abortion was evil and was herself so fecund that she pumped involuntary breast milk, constantly staining her already grubby two-pieces.

I bided my time, waiting for an opportunity to come out 'naturally' rather than saying: "Right everyone, pens down. I'm a lesbian." My chance came during a PSHE lesson on equality. I had written some key words on the board, one of which was "homosexual".

"Why've we gotta learn abaht queers Miss" they chorused, amiably enough. They were, in the main, a nice bunch of kids.

"Because many people in our society are homosexual," I replied.

"Nobody here's bent Miss," they claimed. "I am," I said.

There was silence. I watched one girl change colour: rose pink to deathly grey. Then there was disbelief. "No you're not Miss. This is one of your role play things".

"No, really I am. I'm not kidding about this".

A barrage of questions followed. I told them that I'd answer them as long as they didn't concern things I considered private, or other members of staff. What ensued was an open discussion about love, freedom, human rights and respect—and I have been privileged to have many such conversations with young people since then.

It wasn't until five minutes before the bell that one of the boys asked: "So what do lesbians do in bed?"

I didn't need to reply: he was instantly slapped down by some hard-case girls for "disrespecting Miss". These same girls asked me if I wanted them to keep it a secret.

So Rome wasn't built in a day—but I thanked them for their consideration, explaining that I'd given it a lot of thought, and the whole point was I had nothing to hide.

In the weeks and months that followed there was a flurry of homophobic incidents. Some of the Afro-Caribbean boys, for example, simply could not accept that there should be an open homosexual in their midst. I spent a great deal of time with these young men equating homophobia with the racism that they experienced every day of their lives. I think that this may have made some impression. But clearly their cultural background and rigid sense of masculinity presented an almost impassable barrier to them. Over time, these incidents reduced in frequency. When kids quietly said "lesbian" as they passed me in the corridor, I always stopped and said: "Yes, that's right anything else you'd like to add?" The worst case was incident involved the aforementioned Head of RE. As soon as she discovered, not just my disgusting sexual preference, but the shocking fact that I'd revealed it to the students, she ceased to speak to, or even acknowledge me. Lucky me—except we had to attend the same meetings and share resources. When, finally I tried to approach her on a matter of school business and, mumbling "pervert", she physically pushed me aside, I had no choice but to initiate a meeting with senior staff and union representatives. During this attempt to resolve our contretemps, the head of RE began screaming at me, accusing me of "sharing vile and filthy secrets with children". I declined to respond and left the room. Now, I don't know what happened in my absence—maybe her God of Love intervened—but she came to me later that day sobbing and begging forgiveness. Clearly the woman was unhinged, but something had shifted in her. From that day on she treated me with respect—one, I like to imagine, born of fear.

Now, it's the nature of the case that coming out is something one must do almost on a daily basis: new people, new forms to fill in and, for me, new schools and classes. In every school where I have subsequently taught I have made it my business to seek out and attack homophobia wherever I encounter it. It is a shocking fact that only six percent of schools in England have equality policies which include homophobia as a form of bullying—when it is, in fact endemic in all schools. It is the last bastion of prejudice and it is allowed to flourish across our education system.

I have chipped away at this hatred by introducing new policies that include advancing the rights enjoyed by the rest of the school community to homosexuals. I have incorporated the concept into the school curriculum, trained staff in ways to deal with it their own classrooms, and I have raised displays of gay history. But most important I am out myself. This is not an easy position to occupy all the time, but to me it is infinitely preferable to allowing the perennial assumptions and prejudices to go unchallenged.

Don't get me wrong. I am glad that the society we live in today has allowed me the same rights as my peers. I am glad that I have been able to come out at school without a legal battle to keep my job. I am glad that I've got enough money to live in a community where my sexuality is common enough to go largely un-remarked. I just have a memory long enough to know that these victories have been hard won. It is a fool who does not learn from history. In a world full of risk; of climate change; of global warfare underpinned by religious hatred, I know that the beast of Capitalist patriarchy under assault will continue to seek out scapegoats. One glance at the history books will show how often in the past that these scapegoats have been us. Personally, I'd like to give the beast a final kick in the bollocks and leave it to die in a ditch while I run off to party with my mates—but I worry it has too much life left to risk turning our backs on it yet.



The Ballad of Shel Silverstein

THE PLAYBOY POET



**"Why do you have a beard?"
"I don't. It's a trick of the light."**

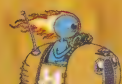
- Shel Silverstein

Josh from The Retro Spankees, (Who also doubles as the story teller) takes some time out to tell you about his favourite songwriter/children's poet, Shel Silverstein.

What would happen if you replaced confetti with spaghetti? What would happen if a man had two faces? What would a man say if he was being eaten by a Boa Constrictor? Not the sort of questions you would ask? Well, they are for one man. This man created worlds of nonsense and beauty. Silliness and love, humour and cruelty. I am talking about country musician, songwriter, cartoonist, children's poet, playwright and all round lunatic genius Shel Silverstein. From the 1950's until his tragic death in May 1999 this multi-talented wonder dazzled audiences and readers with his unique voice and bizarre stories. Whether he's writing about a turtle falling in love with a bagpipe or singing about creating a mechanical woman, this man truly is one of the forgotten stars of the country era. Johnny Cash once said, "Sometimes he wears a beard and shaves his head. Sometimes he shaves his beard and wears his head." Welcome to the weird and wonderful world of Shel Silverstein.

Born in Chicago, Illinois on September 25th 1932, Sheldon Alan Silverstein developed a taste for drawing cartoons at a young age, inspired by the cartoonist Al Capp, Virgil Partch and, as many were, Walt Disney. In September 1953 he was drafted into the US army. He was assigned a year later to write for Pacific Stars and Stripes, a service newspaper for soldiers in Japan and Korea, helping to boost the moral of these brave men. He quickly became a cartoonist for the paper. His crude and humorous style, with some cartoons depicting fifteen foot commanding officers, was a big hit. His work was compiled into a book called 'Take Ten' (also known as 'Grab Your Socks'). After, he returned home to Chicago and, as a civilian, began to do freelance work for different magazines. Writing and drawing for such magazines as *Look*, *Sports Illustrated* and *This Week*. He also worked at a baseball park selling hotdogs. He set a record of the number of hotdogs sold in one night. In 1957 Shel became the leading cartoonist for Playboy magazine in which he produced 23 instalments of illustrated travel journals "Shel visits...". In these cartoons he travelled to such places as the Chicago White Sox training camp and a nudist colony in New Jersey. In one particular issue, he drew himself complaining in a Swiss village saying, "I'll give them 15 minutes and if nobody yodels, I'm going back to the hotel." These were collected into a book in 2007 called 'Shel Silverstein Around the World', forwarded by the original Playboy himself, Hugh Hefner. His cartoons appeared in every issue of Playboy magazine from 1957 through to the mid 1970's. He was quickly becoming a success, his work being seen (read/followed?) by thousands of readers. Because, of course, you only read Playboy for the articles. But his editor, Harper and Row, (now Harper Collins) wanted him to expand his career. And expand he did.

Now, it would be an understatement to say that Shel was a big kid. He was more than that. He had a way of telling children the truth, while still making it playful and entertaining. This is what sparked his children's poetry career. Having never studied poetry Shel (Uncle Shelby to the kids) dived head first into the world of children's stories. His first book, 'The Lion That Shot Back', was published in 1963. Using his own illustrations, he managed to capture the story and present it in a way that was readable by children. He quickly became a success. His next book 'The Giving Tree' was one of his best known, a beautiful tale of a young boy who found a tree that gave him what he wanted. Many of his poems were



collected into full books. The first of which was 'Where the Sidewalk Ends'. Among these poems you will find my favourite Shel Silverstein poem, 'The Bagpipe That Didn't Say No', a heartbreaking story of a turtle who finds a bagpipe on the beach and falls in love with her. "Will you marry me today, is it no you are going to say?" and the bagpipe didn't say no".

Shel's career was beginning to take off. But this wasn't the only thing that was starting. In June 1970 his daughter Shanna was born. Her mother, Susan Hastings, sadly passed away in 1975. Shanna was raised after the death of her mother by her Aunt and Uncle. He dedicated his book 'Who Wants a Cheap Rhinoceros' to them in appreciation for their generosity. Unfortunately, this was not the end of the tragedy in Shel's life. In April 1982, Shanna died of a cerebral aneurysm, aged 11. 'A Light in the Attic' was dedicated in her memory. Although they weren't around for long, their memories will last forever in his work.

Shel's other passion was music. He studied music at Chicago College of Performing Arts at Roosevelt University. He was definitely a busy man. Whilst writing for Playboy, he made his first record, 'Hairy Jazz' in 1959. He was promptly launched into the country music scene and recorded many other albums afterwards. People instantly fell in love with his way of storytelling. This was not, however, for kids. His high pitched screaming voice told stories of the porn industry, what a man would do to get a front row seat to see Johnny Cash and a woman doing rather naughty things to a pony. His first live recording was the superbly titled, 'I'm So Good I Don't Have to Brag'. Recorded at Mother Blues, his hometown of Chicago in 1965.

In the late 1960's the word of this bizarre and strange talent began to spread. He wrote many songs for country musicians, many of which were for Dr Hook and the Medicine Band including their hit, 'The Ballad of Lucy Jordan'. The most famous of his contributions followed: In 1969 Shel wrote the Johnny Cash classic, 'A Boy Named Sue'. If you are unfamiliar with this song, it tells the story of a boy who was named Sue, who goes in search of the reason why his father gave him a girl's name. Johnny was so immensely happy with the work Shel did on this, he put him on 'The Johnny Cash Show' in 1970. They both performed together on the show and sang 3 verses of 'A Boy Named Sue'. Shel, being a huge fan of Cash, couldn't quite get over this for the rest of the show. He later wrote a sequel to this Cash hit deciding it was about time that you heard the father's side of the story. This was to be called, 'The Father

of a Boy Named Sue', revealing how the father chose the name, not to toughen his son up, but just for a laugh. The ballad of Shel Silverstein was far from over. Not only did he write for musicians, but he also wrote songs for films. He composed the soundtrack for the 1970 film *Ned Kelly* performed by Waylon Jennings and Kris Kristofferson. In 1990 he wrote the song 'I'm Checking Out' from the film *Postcards From the Edge* for which Shel received an Oscar and A Golden Globe nomination. The film, adapted from the bestselling novel by Carrie Fisher (that's right, Princess Leia), depicts a recovering drug addict on the rocky end of her career. Which we all know is what real country music is about. Drugs, alcohol, girls and fighting. If it's not written in a bar, on a hay bale or on a porch, it's not country music.

Meryl Streep sang Shel's song as the finale of the film, belting out the chorus "I'm checkin' out of this heartbreak hotel". Way to go Meryl, you go girl. Urrgh, don't worry, I'm never going to say that again.

So what do we now know about Shel? He was a playful, eccentric, fatherly figure. A man of many talents and many friends in all the right places. A man I think everyone should know. I don't know where I'd be today without the influence of Shel. I first got introduced to Shel when Jo (Joda Persoda from The Retro Spankees fame) lent me 'Where the Sidewalk Ends'. I was so amazed and obsessed with this book that I still haven't returned it to her. Take that Jo! As a fan I was shocked to find out that hardly anyone in the UK has heard of Shel Silverstein. So in light of this, The Storyteller was born. For those of you who are unaware, The Storyteller is my dedication to Shel where I play acoustic interpretations of his poems. My objective was to introduce children to his work by playing birthday parties, festivals and schools. It's a chance for them to hear some good music, beautiful stories and join in with some singing. One song they enjoy in particular is 'Boa Constrictor' A poem about a man's last words whilst being eaten by a giant snake. I get the kids to shout out the names of different snakes in the middle of the song. But it's not just for kids. Adults really enjoy shouting out too. "Black Mamba!", "Reticulated Python!", "TROUSER SNAKE!". Sometimes they're louder than the little ones. That's the beauty of Shel. With simple words, he opens the minds of the young and unleashes the child within, no matter how old you are. So get yourself any one of the amazing pieces of work from his collection. Maybe some *Playboy*. But be sure to read it.

www.shelsilverstein.com
www.myspcae.com/iamthestoryteller



BRUTALISED

THE PLANNERS & THE PLANNED PART 2

BY GARY MILLS

Perhaps those who might have made most sense of the Eastern District's maze of walkways are the sufferers of Dromomania, the psychological condition that compelled the 'fuguers' of late 19th century France to wander uncontrollably and against their will for days on end. The subconscious impact of the environment and the influence of spatial parameters on health and behaviour provide the apparatus with which one can assess the relative accomplishment of the planner, the creator of the space. Guy Debord applied the theory of 'dérive' (literally translated as 'drift') to his study of architecture, where the simple act of continuous strolling within a built environment became the means of psychogeography, of unlocking the true comprehension of one's surroundings regardless of the bias of style or received opinion. Goldfinger incidentally had already expounded upon a similar premise regarding the enclosed environment in a piece entitled 'The Sensation of Space', written for *The Architectural Review* in 1941. Matters external perhaps to the theorised inhabitation of residential space created in the expansion area of Northampton – enclosed or otherwise – would have instilled the Dromomaniac urge readily expressed by some of its early occupants, that of wishing to leave, preferably returning to London.

It may not be possible to completely discount a straight reluctance on the part of the uprooted to wholeheartedly embrace the utopian ideal, but an examination of how it might have felt to live and work in the brand new Northampton – notwithstanding the physicality of materials employed and their efficacy – leaves us with a pointed legacy for those who conceived it. In her book, *Estates: An Intimate History*, Lynsey Hanley charts the troubled path of social housing in the UK, and reflects in fact that the planners of the '60s and '70s made any kind of open-eyed on foot wanderlust wholly impractical. This is borne out in the clustered island of expansion estates in the east of Northampton, where Hanley's image of "walkways and subways that direct pedestrians from home to shop and back as a funnel directs liquid into a bottle" manifests itself in three tiers of isolation and suppression.

The Eastern District itself is, if you like, 'Berlinised' completely in the first instance by the A43 dual carriageway, splicing the new town from the old entirely save for a handful of dank buried underpasses. Secondly, movement out of individual estates is again rendered precarious in view of the over-emphasis on the car, with walking restricted in many areas to grass verges and embankments. Abruptly ending pavements on estate perimeters back up into high-fenced 'rat-runs' and communal parking bays, and Radburn's accent on the focal point of public space directly outside the front door eventually confines residents to their homes in view of encroaching anti-social behaviour, or at least the fear of it. It's not hard to envisage how this hemming in of the horizons of the physical environment might impact upon the aspirations and perspective of the mind. Matters can't have been helped by the fact that as late as 1996, a report into the problems on the Eastern District by the community research officer John Woolham revealed that few of the bus routes in the area strayed beyond the boundary of the development, with most only going as far as the Weston Favell shopping centre between the Lumbertubs and Standens Barn estates.

The formative years of all new developments are inevitably marked by the difficulties faced by residents as estates are built around them, as services and facilities are established perhaps out of step with the rising head count. With slum clearance, the working classes – though choked by poverty and the pallor of living conditions hanging over from the Industrial Revolution – saw their natural communities destroyed, and obliged the glare of the Development Corporation brochure under the pretense that new ones would simply emerge. What was impressed upon them evaporated into something more akin to the imposition of regime change by a Western Government, i.e. "we know what's best for you better than you possibly could". Similarly, Ernő Goldfinger created tower blocks for the working class, yet the house he designed for himself was a more conventional brick-built dwelling.

The ensuing experience of the overspill revealed the folly, and the effective repackaging and replacement of one kind of slum with another. The realities of divided families, unfamiliar surroundings and the pressure to start again with new homes, new jobs and new friends couldn't be endured without some considerable pain, termed by the Northampton branch of the Standing Conference of Women's Organisations in 1984 as "new town neurosis". Indeed, one of Lynsey Hanley's most intriguing arguments relates to an investigation into the ways in which life in social housing in itself can affect one's health. Key to this was a report into the relative infirmity suffered by residents of poor New York housing projects, where conditions not directly related to gang violence or drugs saw abnormal concentration, particularly in the young. Hanley attributes this distorted ratio of premature deterioration to spiked levels of the stress hormone cortisol, as if the mental and sociological confinement central to the experience of poverty itself is as deadly as the physical pressures of thuggery and aggression.

A different kind of brutality was brought to bear upon the urban centre of Northampton in tandem with the NDC's housing blitz to the east, where the stark 'béton brut' architecture brought its own sickly haze of anxieties with which the townsfolk would have to acclimatise themselves. Whether or not the overall geometric aesthetic of the buildings was fully acknowledged by the public, their sensitivities to the mood created by some of them were acute, due in no small measure to the sheer newness and upheaval of what was being proposed. The Grosvenor Centre for example not only transformed the town's shopping experience when it opened in 1975, but brought with it a pervading malaise of illnesses for staff to endure. A community health doctor was eventually detailed in 1978 to undertake an inquiry into the rash of unexplained headaches and feelings of nausea, claustrophobia and drowsiness being reported throughout the centre, mirroring a similar wave of symptoms seen among staff at Runcorn's Shopping City. An eventual diagnosis simply attached blame to the artifice of the surroundings, with a lack of natural light or fresh air and constant dry atmosphere conspiring against the wellbeing of those working within.

GREYFRIARS U

What's important to remember here however is what this revolutionised townscape represented to citizens more used to the context of a traditional marketplace. The Grosvenor Centre was described in its' infancy as 'space age', whilst the escalators inside the annexed atrium of the Greyfriars Bus Station were commented upon at the time of its' opening as "a frightening prospect" for some users.

Unveiled in 1976, the all-encompassing local hatred of Greyfriars passed almost immediately into modern folklore, a monument to the public's general aversion to Brutalist architecture and possibly on a par of enmity only with Portsmouth's Tricorn Centre and the Trinity Square development in Gateshead. It is a miracle that at the time of writing, Greyfriars is the only one of those three still standing. Designed by Arup Associates via commission from the County Borough, Greyfriars featured as one of 12 buildings nominated by the public for 'Demolition' in a Channel 4 programme of the same name in 2006, yet the management and application of the original intentions for the building are as archetypal as its' unfavourable reception. Some 200,000 square feet of office space was built on top of the bus station complex, but has seldom ever been let, and although an integral part of the original plans approved by the council, the accompanying rooftop garden area was damned as a white elephant from the off. In the main, pedestrians have also shown that they'd rather play chicken with turning buses than navigate the purpose-built yet convoluted (and not a little intimidating) subway system.

S BUS STATION

The stentorian blare and vast stature of Greyfriars infuses the experience of simply passing through it with a palpable terror, heightened by the inescapable darkness within. With its' slit-sided half-hexagon hangar towers seemingly pre-dating the Tyrell building of Ridley Scott's dystopian *Blade Runner* by five years, it is fear made graphic. Alongside the brick Brutalism of both Greyfriars and the Derngate theatre (from 1983, a very late example of the genre, its castellations rather more amenable in tone than the bus station but no less dramatic), Northampton is also the site for some cautious application of the period's emblematic building material, exposed concrete. The National Lift Tower – formerly known as the Express Lift Tower – was opened by the Queen in 1982, and in just 15 years was granted Grade II listed status, at the time the youngest building to be accredited as such in the UK. Its forked, leggy profile stalks the St James district at some 127.45 metres, and after over a decade out of commission (during which fears over concrete cancer were raised) it has recently been restored and re-opened for purpose. The Riverside House office block on the Bedford Road meanwhile appropriates the peppered portal windows of the lift tower into a repeat pattern, its waffled indentations now enclosing the operations of the DVLA.

The relative esteem in which Northampton's buildings are held seems to echo a muddled apprehension towards both urban progress in general and its tortuous undertaking. Characterized alternately by rampant speed and uncomfortable stasis, the image of modern development meanwhile appears to have been marked only by a reiterated grinding down of the town's self-respect. The same Borough Council which presides over the mooted demolition of structures barely a generation old ponders the selling off of the Archway Cottages lining Abington Park, which, though Grade II listed and dating from the 17th Century, lie derelict and boarded up. Of similar certification and mismanagement is the Cluniac nunnery known as Delapre Abbey to the south of the town. Built in 1145, the Abbey accommodated the funeral procession of Queen Eleanor in 1290, and still today boasts immense gardens, a lake and unrestrained wooded vistas. Various renovations and ownerships over the years however have culminated in near ruin, its failing lifeblood at present being the goodwill of volunteers and a sadly feeble power struggle between numerous committees of dubious intention.

While the town at large is torn between the kind of preservation and heritage principles which might have saved lamented icons like the Peacock Hotel and Emporium Arcade – which framed the marketplace before the dreaded spectre of 1960s regeneration swept into town – and the nominal progress of recurring housing expansion, the true spirit of the futuristic, of optimism and risk, saw a pallid application in Northampton. And although they quite clearly made their mark, the Development Corporation were evidently not the frontiersmen perhaps the town deserved.

In view of this, it may be that the new town expansion's partially forgotten aspects just serve to further isolate the wishes of Northampton and its inhabitants from the irreversible collapse of the tradition it seems to treasure, and consequently renders it in part powerless in the face of continued short-sighted development. If, for example, the inclination on the part of the NDC when it released a risible, indefensible pop single in an attempt to attract prospective industry to the town – just when it was feared glue-sniffing and widespread vandalism might be spiraling out of control on their estates – was to divert the attention of the public, to spin their legacy into one of philanthropic nobility, to what degree were they successful? Why is it that in the main '60 Miles By Road Or Rail', released by EMI in 1980 and now an embarrassing provincial cult, is all that is remembered of the period, along with the crime? And what informs the offhandedness with which Hugh Barty-King mentions in passing – and under stipend from the NDC – a teenager being "blasted in the face" by a shotgun-wielding visitor to his home in *Expanding Northampton*, as if reporting on a cat stuck up a tree?



The Grosvenor Centre

It's true that Gordon Redfern may be conspicuous in his espousal of derisory materials and methods, and the reasons for this may forever prove a mystery. The specific examination however of planning, layout and maintenance failures, rather than a condemnation of architecture as such, is surely vital if errors are not to be repeated. The sorely lacking upkeep of Northampton's new town, exacerbated by the right-to-buy scheme introduced by the Tories in 1980, which cut a swathe through the housing stock due to be inherited by the Borough Council upon the NDC's dissolution five years later, is sadly evidence of the speed and rank impracticality of what was set in motion.

But just as the WNDC issue their own promotional shots of brand new, florid, sapling-lined housing estates in 2010, some whose parents were suitably persuaded by the advertising campaigns of their predecessors during the 1970s now speak in overwhelmingly positive terms of their experiences growing up. A Facebook group dedicated to formative memories of the budding Lings and Lumber-tubs estates largely consists of the fondest discussions and recollections of a time before stigma's blight was established. Perhaps encouraging accounts such as these might eventually outweigh the negative connections that the expansion's housing area has struggled to shake off in any wider debate, and Northamptonshire Police's CASPAR (crime and anti-social behaviour partnership) initiative may just help turn the tide as well. Pioneered in Bellinge

in the late 1990s, its drive to reverse the mistakes inherent in planning schemes of the past has helped reduce crime significantly on estates throughout the town since.

It is surely fundamentally preferable that instead of reveling in the vulgarity of blame and prejudice attendant to crime and social housing, we attempt to dredge root causes, and take heed of warnings shaped by past trends. Before he became city architect of Sheffield and supervisor of the one-time pioneering Park Hill development, JL Womersley was one of the planners behind the 1940s Kings Heath estate. In 1969 the Chronicle & Echo took him back to the area to find residents complaining of gangs, sometimes 40-strong, who would "congregate on the precinct" and "run wild, damage property and use indecent language".

How much did the NDC – for whom Womersley was a consultant – further accommodate what has now escalated into an unwelcome and seemingly immovable facet of everyday life? Perhaps before we prepare to pour scorn on the 'feral' youths who we imagine bring unprecedented grief to the neighbourhood, or lobby for the locking up of the parents who don't claim responsibility, we should consider the civic fathers who will never be brought to account.



BARBARY COASTERS

PART TWO.... AND THERE I DID WEEP.

Concluding her two-part tour of a vanished San Francisco, Dodgem Logic's exemplary ex-pat Melinda Gebbie fails to remember any punk rockers with flowers in their hair...and stick around after the performance for the first ever gallery exhibition of her extraordinary new mind-bending masterpieces!

In my mother's secretary desk, under the dull gold-glazed Americana motif mirror upon which hung the black g-string Trina Robbins had passed on from the famed MAD cartoonist Wally Wood, lay a slightly dented box of Russian cigarettes, the box covered in a glorious colour-tinted extravaganza of the Sputnik launch – if you've not seen it, the system looks like a Spider from Mars. Inside were genuine cigarettes from 1958, gold-tipped, impossibly stale and I wish I still had them today. Without Sputnik and the threat it posed to the phallic imperialist mindset of Capitalist America, we might today never have been witness to Buzz Aldrin being the first American to piss on the moon.

Ten years on, America was also fire-bombing the lush villages of Vietnam and Cambodia. We were a busy, caffeinated nation full of piss and vinegar, eager to bend the laws of both Nature and Mankind to our own adolescent fever-dreams. Jovial as Santa Claus pushing Coke, we were helping others to join in our tyrannical spree by placing puppet dictators in South and Central America, Iran and the Philippines. In 1967 the burgeoning Hippie Movement became popularised by the Human Be-In in Golden Gate Park.

In the early 1960s, Ken Kesey and the Merry Pranksters, sympathetic with the Beats' ideas of on-the-road adventures, lived communally with Neal Cassady, Kerouac's old buddy, and a slightly different new species of adventurer, personified in the fun-loving, rascally form of *Realist* editor Paul Krassner, who, like Yippie's Abbie Hoffman and Jerry Rubin, was full of political mischief and loved poking military and political bigwigs in the public eye with a burnt stick.

As Hippies with their Make Love Not War ethos were taking psychedelic drugs, turning on, tuning in and dropping out along with Timothy Leary, other professional drug-heads and the rest of the 100,000-strong young thronging the tiny neighbourhood of Haight Ashbury, all hell was busting loose at the halls of learning in Berkeley, where students occupied a derelict park to plant trees, shrubs and flowers, and where Ronald Reagan, then Governor of California, sent in the National Guard to prevent the enactment of the student slogan 'Let a Thousand Parks Bloom'. In my town, Mill Valley, eight miles away, I was eighteen and watched this metamorphosis on black and white TV. Unable to quell my own rockets, in 1967 I left home with a satchel and my pet mouse Garnet, to take the Greyhound to the Wharf Terminal on Lower Market Street, intent upon connecting with the 58 Haight-Ashbury from the 32 Geary.

I stepped off the #58 onto the corner where the Drogstore Café stood and in the sulphur glow of the streetlights I saw people scattering to left and right. Coming towards me was an elderly woman with a Chihuahua on a lead, and as they got closer I could see that both woman and dog had tears streaming down their faces. Then I smelled the teargas. I hurried to the Drogstore and sat down at a table. I was the only person in the café.

"What's going on out there?" I asked the woman at the counter.

"Oh, the cops are at it again. They don't like all the kids wandering the streets after bedtime so they clear it at dusk. Stops 'em begging and jaywalking, I guess. At least for a while."

"Is it hard to find a place to sleep around here?" She smiled crookedly in reply.

"There's a Diggers' hotline down by the panhandle. They let you look up phone numbers of volunteers who'll take on kids for the night."

Over a hot chocolate I watched dusk turn to evening outside the glass. On the neighbourhood sidewalk, the long-haired locals; their dogs on strings; pale newcomers dressed in what they left home in, like me. It would be a long night, one way or the other.

Down at the Panhandle, Emmett Grogan in flat cap and with shovel in hand was organising other men in digging up the turf. He smiled and pointed to a building across the way where hippie young men and women were answering phones.

I was paired up with a man who described his required house-guest for the night as follows: "Must be young woman between 18 and 25, not wanted by the police. I'm a professional and responsible college instructor. No druggies. No dogs."

Did he mean pets or ugly women? A Diggers' van dropped me off in Bernal Heights, at a cracker-boxy yellow house set back from the street. I stayed there for the next year with the odd thirty-five year-old psychiatric evaluation professor who plied me with personality inventory tests before dumping me at Langley Porter Neuropsychiatric Clinic, where he had a friend who enrolled me in their outpatient program as a drug burnout because I wouldn't marry him.

During that year, however, we got around a bit. I saw Janis Joplin at the Matrix with Big Brother and the Holding Company, going backstage to show her my unfinished portrait of her. She laughed appreciatively and offered me a slug of Southern Comfort. James Gurley from her band had an ex-girlfriend who lived up the street from us in Bernal with her three year-old son who was, oddly, still nursing. She was still very much in love with James and gushed about how much she thought their son resembled him. Haunting, as I saw no such similarity. We got a small self-help group organised on another occasion and visited Bill Graham at his office above Winterland on Upper Market, to see if he might give us a batch of psychedelic posters to sell for our cause.

We sat opposite Graham while he shouted down the phone at some poor hireling about the fact that Donovan Leitch had gone AWOL from a gig because of a pregnant girlfriend. "I don't give a fuck whether she's squeezing out the Baby Jesus for the Second Coming, you fucking asshole! Get someone up there, grab him off that fucking crag in Ireland or wherever it is and bring him to me! Mealy-mouthed goddamn hippie scum! I've got a motherfucking business to run!" He stood up, stomped over to a bookshelf, pulled down about fifty glossy copies of Wes Wilsons, Alton Kelleys, Rick Griffins and Stanley Mouses and shoved them at us. "Okay?" he bellowed, hoarsely. "Yes, yes, thank you..." We rushed out, our tails on fire. Later I heard the reason that he was such a bastard was that he'd marched across Poland as a child to escape the Nazis.



He was the first hippie event promoter to use Hell's Angels as crowd control. It was bad enough at the last Winterland gig, where Big Brother played and there were three inches of beer on the floor, but historically Altamont, where Jagger and pals played, produced a genuine fatality...but I'm getting ahead of myself.

When Haight Street was quieter during the winter months, the neighbourhood equalised to a softer, more intimate feel. Ron Thelin still had his head shop. These have disappeared from western culture with a government edict in the 1970s forbidding the sale of drugs paraphernalia. Time was when you could stroll in, buy a decorated water-pipe from India, or an American Indian peace-pipe or a hookah, if you so desired. This was also the first venue to feature Underground comics in a commercial business.

Robert Crumb was still vending *ZAP #1s* from a battered baby carriage, but the Thelin brothers, Ron and Jay were two of the very first bizniz hippies. Behind the beaded curtain at the back of Ron's shop was where I first heard the marvellous strains of *A Day in the Life*, reclining on one of many beanbags amid a fug of shared doobie fumes. As that famous final chord swelled, it reverberated throughout our various clustered organs and we sighed as one. "Gotta be the truest sound ever", one of our voices said. Silent agreement from all. The Grateful Dead's *Anthem of the Sun* played at the Straight Theatre, its hoarding changed from Haight like the 'o' in Drogstore had been changed from 'u'. All I can remember from that night was that I twirled in place for what seemed like hours, like a paisley dervish, and the music was twirling right along within me and without me.

The hippies' philosophy was primarily embedded in the word 'YES'. Yes to everything organic; the soft, ample plenty of Mother Earth; her tits, her birdsong, her brownies full of lovely fudgy hashish; the roiling colours of intensified vision brought on by fragrant buds of home-grown marijuana, not that stuff that smelled of horse-sweat, but seductively perfumey buds, kept in secret coffee-cans brought down from the Sierras, or smuggled close to the body from the velvet green of Polynesian valleys.

Life was good, simple, easy. It floated and undulated, like the flower forms of the newly rediscovered Art Nouveau posters of the Czech artist Alphonse Mucha. After the scratchy, lean and dark artwork of the Beat period, exemplified by Ben Shahn's drawings, the hippie movement turned the Beat motto "Let's get lost" (in black and white) to "Let's do the horizontal boogie on an endless veldt of shimmering cosmic possibility". Rather than simply disappearing out of earshot of the consumerist workaday world, the hippies surrounded themselves with an eroticised environment which made straight culture (straight also as in "The forms of authority are rigid, the forms of pleasure are undulant" - Henri Fuseli) seem as strict and uninteresting and conformist as it indeed was.

This was a youth movement that dared to be celebratory. It reviled war and even, as in Buffy St. Marie's song, accused the Universal Soldier of being the perpetrator of war, for without him there would be none. Conscription in the U.S., however, was mandatory, and those who tried to flee to Canada were often caught and imprisoned like a cartoonist friend of mine, Guy Colwell, who was psychologically scarred by his time in military prison and refused to speak of it to anyone.

Of course, where there is freedom there is freefall. Where baby is free to roam, baby will eventually find the wall socket and insert his tiny digit to less than hilarious results.

By the time 1969 had rolled around, the accepted ethos of female behaviour... "if she says no, she ain't going with the flow"... had turned the freedom to say yes into a compunction to lie down with any and all males. Guys got angry if you didn't act like a proper hippie chick. You laundered their batiks and dashikis; you raised their offspring like a good squaw and home-cooked their veggie suppers.

Somehow the beads, headbands, moccasins and Indian motif tobacco pouches had perhaps subliminally suggested that women go back in time to a realm of absolute masculine privilege somewhere north of Victorianism. Along with that, the inequalities of America's casual (at best) and deeply ingrained racism were to become pressure-points so that the Watts riots bloomed in Los Angeles, causing black people in miserably poor neighbourhoods to break out and, unfortunately, set fire to their own streets instead of striking out against the richer white areas (where they were more likely to be arrested). It must be said that hippies were for the most part white, although Jimi Hendrix did seem to be hippiedom's greatest guitarist, even if Sun Ra and his Arkestra contained the only other psychedelic (as opposed to Funkadelic, like Bootsy Collins and George Clinton) black stars. Gil Scott-Heron summed up the period nicely with the poem beginning "A rat just bit my sister Nell, and whitey's on the moon. I watch her arm begin to swell, and whitey's on the moon." Although hippies did make an effort to politicise themselves, notably on campuses like Berkeley and in Kent State, Ohio, they left the race question largely up to activists of the period like Harry Belafonte, Sidney Poitier, Maya Angelou, Miriam Makeba, Dick Gregory and other stars of the stage, screen or poetry circuit who were themselves African-American.

The death-knell of hippiedom came while I was working the midnight to seven A.M. shift at the Military outlet of the Post Office. While sorting magazines one night I noticed a distinctly hippie face on the cover of LIFE magazine. He had brown eyes, long blond hair, and at a peremptory glance I thought him handsome. Then I read the strap-line "Charles Manson, cult killer". I felt a little embarrassed that I'd thought he was handsome. I wondered then how many hippie guys I'd flirted with, done drugs with and bedded who might have been personifications of evil incarnate themselves. That photograph, and my response to it, shook up my belief in long hair as the emblem of youthful virtuousness. I became disenchanted about the whole movement. I'd got a job and couldn't loiter around the Panhandle any longer. I'd stopped respecting guys who spent their time visiting available chicks for a quickie. 1970 rolled around, indecorously garbed in cartoon polyester flares and blood-curdling hot orange muumuu prints.

The richly textured dream-stream of Country Joe and the Fish, Quicksilver Messenger Service and the Doors was being replaced by the brainless techno-beat of the Disco Divas like Evelyn 'Champagne' King with Shame and Freda Payne with *Band of Gold*: if we can't sustain a philosophy or keep organised long enough to protest, then let's do poppers and dance! My gay pals Wesley and Bruce took me to the 24-hour wonderland of Gay Purree S.F. style, Polk Street, aka Polkstrasse.



Along with burgers at a train car and sundaes at our fave ice-cream parlour, our pit-stops included Buzzby's (Old Time) Disco, where we strutted and fretted, guzzled and sweated our hour upon the bulb-lit stage along with countless Tom of Finland lookalikes sporting similar moustaches, plaid sports shirts and sprayed-on Levi jeans.

We took in hysterically over-coloured homemade gay musicals the likes of which were unreproducible, The Cockettes being the most memorable. To this day, my sense of psychedelic unrestraint is due mainly to the free box fashion manias of stars like Hibiscus (former anti-war protestor Gary Marshall who played the Palace in productions like *Pearls Over Shanghai* or their final 1972 show, *Journey to the Centre of Uranus*) and Sylvester, who were San Francisco's answer to New Orleans' Wild Tchoupitoulas, smeared in lippy, blue paint and rainbow wigs, their gold foil auras dazzling like the vaginal charms of the Virgin of Guadalupe and singing their hearts out in chaotic coloratura caricature. Eventually I got sucked into a local mini-vortex known as the Underground Comix scene. It seemed there weren't enough women to fill a clubhouse on this art patch and so *Wimmen's Comix* (descriptive if not imaginative) was headhunting in the unlikeliest of hedges for talent.

Undiscovered painter I, I took advantage of low numbers to join the herd and scribble out my direst whims for small change – the artistic equivalent of wanking for pennies. Still, for all that, we considered ourselves a movement, as there were enough of us to fill a bus and we felt ourselves to be going somewhere, even without the benefit of a driver. One of the males specialised in caricaturing racism, embellishing the artwork with a steatopygic obsession (*Angelfood McSpade*, by Robert Crumb). Another crew, Dan O'Neill and his Air Pirates, were stuck on imitating Disney characters with a porn bent, for which O'Neill was sued. Yet another, S. Clay Wilson, had a continuing character, the Checkered Demon, whose pork sword was bent. Another had invented an impossibly old man who found himself constantly getting kicked out of coffee houses for getting over-amped; the Forty Year-Old Hippie by Ted Richards. One of the most memorable U.G.s was about the tortured religious schisms of a teen born to parents of two different faiths, Jewish and Catholic. His name was Binky Brown, his nemesis was the Holy Virgin Mary and the artist and writer was Justin Green.

Our imaginations ran riot. They played in the gutters, traversed the alimentary canal, dissected anthropomorphism, traded genders, grew extra sets of genitals, broke into and out of ladies' prisons, rode little green dinosaurs, fell in love with sex-dolls, ridiculed the government's casual stance on radioactivity and even went to cartoon heaven together via a nuclear explosion.

We went to parties and attended each other's gallery shows where we shouted epithets, bit each other and drunkenly fell into bushes for cartoon sex. It was great. It was horrible. It was unrepeatable, believe me. Most of the others don't remember to this day the kind of shenanigans they got up to. Suddenly it was 1977. I'd done my first and only solo comic, *Fresca Zizis* (or 'Fresh Cocks').

The title came from my brief stint as a T.V. news-station graphic artist working full time, taking the place of a travelling news-cam. "Fresca Zizis" had referred to an Italian bakery owner who'd made breasts and cocks out of meringue and displayed them in his store window on a Sunday! The nerve! Keep that kind of stuff for the weekdays, buddy! Our income was suddenly cut off when the South African backers pulled out of San Francisco and I was on the street again.

By this time, music had changed as well.

Jim Osborne, my dear dark comrade in ink for many years, was hanging around with punks. He had re-introduced me to the Shangri-Las, and I'd follow him musically anywhere. He brought over new and odd stuff like the shocking pink vinyl version of the Fabulous Poodles, and John Cooper Clark, enunciating Mancunian paeans about marrying monsters from outer space; the Slits; Au Pairs; Crass, with their impossibly methed-up drummer; Jello Biafra and the Dead Kennedys; Millions of Dead Cops; Black Flag and stories of performers like Darby Crash who jumped off the stage into a pile of broken glass...and of course, Malcolm McLaren's media experiment, the Sex Pistols. Jim put needle to vinyl in the living room while I washed dishes away down the long hall. I sneered as I soaped and rinsed, but after the fifth record I'd kind of gotten the gist of it. Soon I was whining along with Patrick Fitzgerald about having "a safety pin stuck in my heart, for you".



I went along with Ted "Forty Year-Old Hippie" Richards and his wife Terry to see Devo. We pogoed all night, and when Mark Mothersbaugh leaped out onto the sidewalk in front of the Club Mabuhay and began to do frog-jumps, I reached over and pinched his ass through his blue satin shorts. He stared dreamily up at me through vastly magnifying spectacles. Talk about geek allure!

A crowd of us were there the night that Jello Biafra got pantsed on stage by the front row and stood shivering and pale in his tattered undies. Sweet! I began to hang around with a generation younger than myself – boys and girls with hair like warriors and eyes like cruel stars. At the offices of mags like *Search and Destroy* and *DAMAGE*, young stuff with impossibly long legs slouched on the sofas, the girls in tiny, tight ribbons of black for skirts. Their shoes were out of Al Capp's hillbilly Dogpatch – giant lace-up kickers which they employed in clumsy flirtation. One girl sighed as she left with a poster from a Clash concert, saying "I just saw Jonathan Formula. I think he really likes me. He punched me hard in the arm."

We didn't have neighbourhood gang wars. We had style wars. If you were caught passing a bar that was emptying out its crew-cut lookalike suburban straights, they might chase you for wearing black and having hair soaped up into spikes.

One night Jello Biafra came by to invite my former armed robber turned roommate Rob McColl to go on a rock-throwing tour through the meticulously well-kempt Richmond District. He came to the door and handed Rob a pile of stones. "No room for girls", he said.

I waited up till he returned. "How many windows did you hit?" "I dunno. About twelve, I think." "You guys're bastards for not taking me", I pouted. "I've lived near there years longer than you." We got thrown out of clubs for bringing our own booze, climbed cars, broke aerials and even busted up a poetry reading.

The last time I saw San Francisco was in 2006. Jim Osborne had died five years earlier, cackling about 9/11. He'd always been a dark horse. Another close buddy, Jay Kinney, with whom I stayed, had been an intellectual firebrand in the old glory days of comics, editing *Anarchy*, *Young Lust*, and even doing a breathtaking stand-up comedy routine about Marxism at the *Co-Evolution Quarterly* picnic, having been on the staff with Stewart Brand for years. Jay had moved from cartooning to being publisher of *Gnosis* magazine, a journal of western mysticism, which was beautifully produced, thought-provoking and erudite, containing unusual and esoteric artwork by such rare talents as Alex Grey. His magazine, however, had met with low sales and was being stored in the same building where his wife (the lovely Dixie, an ex-belly dancer turned expert on comparative religions) worked part time for a bagel magnate. Filling a room almost to the ceiling, this journal of American illumination, spurned by a resolutely un-illuminated public, fell through the floorboards, much as American illumination itself would collapse through the rotting timbers of contemporary culture.

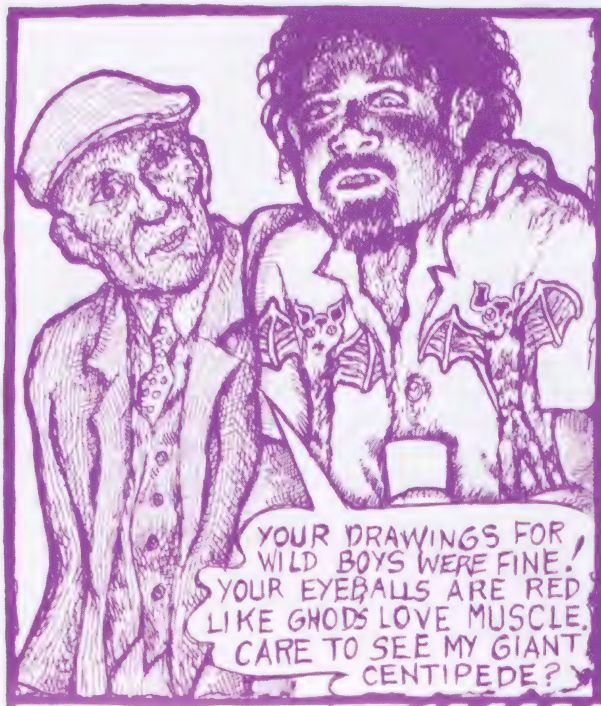
Since 2006, I have only been in dreaming contact with my city. The beautiful de Young Museum, featured in *Vertigo* with Kim Novak on a bench contemplating the portrait of "the beautiful Carlotta, the sad Carlotta", has been torn down and replaced with metal walls.

The thriving Mexican muralists of the Mission have lost their Galleria de la Raza, and as the vibrant wall-paintings fade and become chipped and defaced by gang-tags, the city itself is losing its vibrancy, its sparkle, its heart.

The dot.com boom came and went. Millionaires erected mansions where Marin County's black ghetto Marin City stood, and these powder-blue ghosts of affluence stand largely untenanted. Golden Gate Park is dirty, empty of joyful skaters. Clement Street is littered with filth where once the sidewalks glittered, so close to my flat on Spruce Street. The magic Greenapple Bookstore is an untidy mess where once it was groomed and full of every esoteric volume you thought you'd never find again. Cody's has disappeared – my favourite big bookstore, as has FAO Schwarz, the greatest toy store in the world. The homeless and the terminally ill wander uncared about and find poor solace sleeping in Union Square, once a bright arena full of the self-loving clang of streetcars as they passed, which now seem to toll a death-knell.

Over a year ago, one of my favourite artists from the Underground, S. Clay Wilson, illustrator of William Burroughs' *The Wild Boys*, went out into that warm San Francisco night characteristically inebriated and took a drunken dive from the sidewalk into an onrushing stream of honking cars, fell forward onto his face and broke his own neck. After lying in coma for six weeks in hospital and making slow progress back into the confusing jungle of words, he can now sign his name. His friends await the return of his elaborate and unique drawing skills, and his admirers can send donations (cheques or money orders made out to S. Clay Wilson) to cover his mounting medical expenses to S. Clay Wilson, PO box 14854, San Francisco, CA 94114.

I went to the City in the bloom of my youth, and I can never return to that City again.

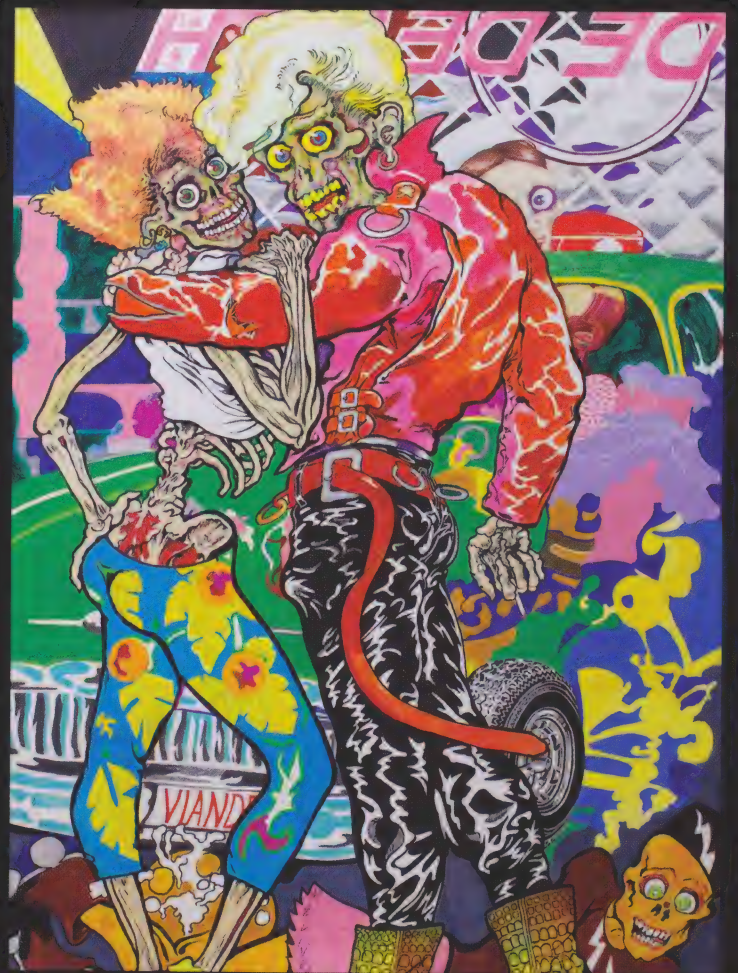




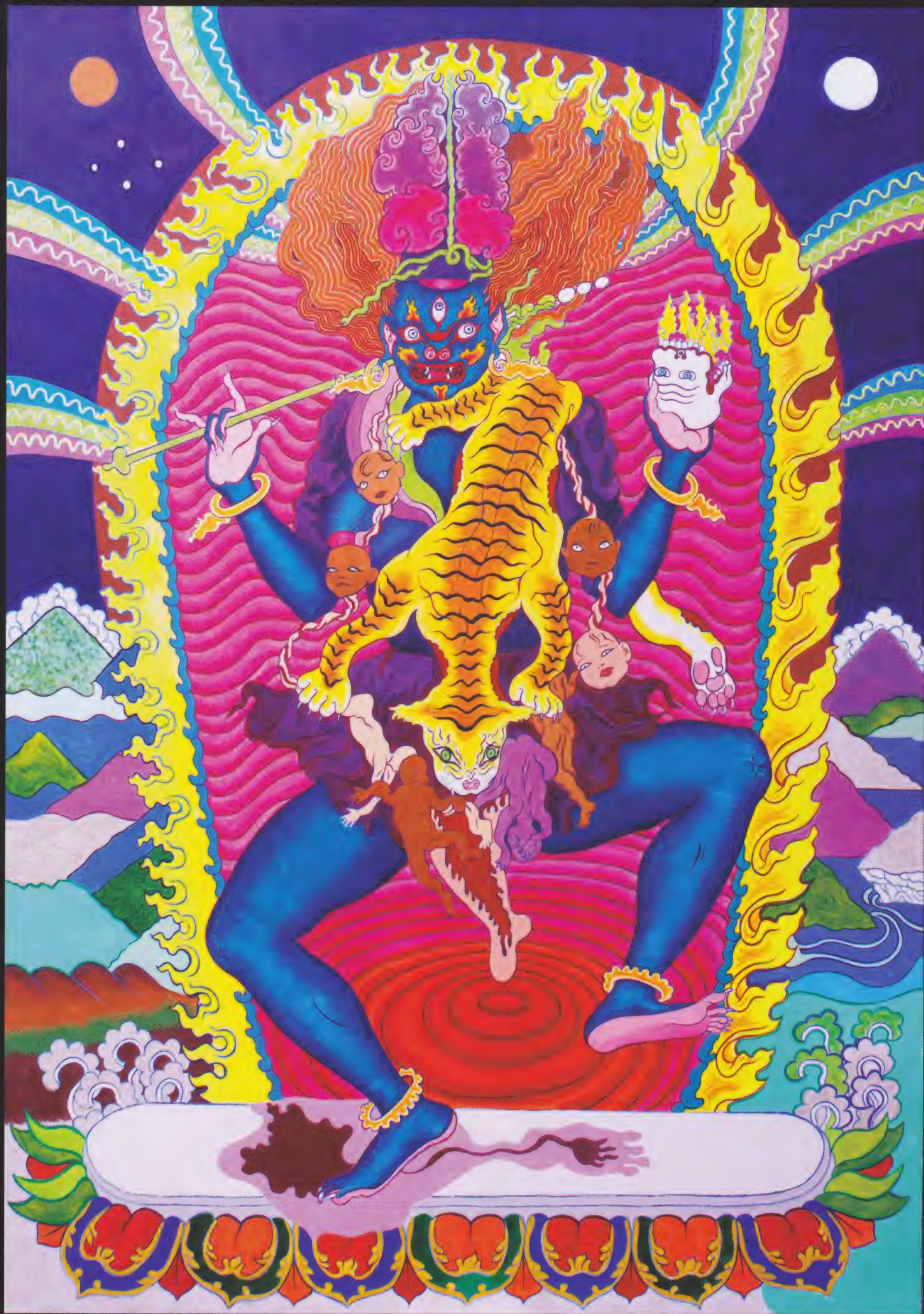
Left to Right
page 1 - Moondance
page 2 - Baghdad by the Bay - Three Paths
page 3 - Three Graces - The Kindly Ones
page 4 - Paul M - Rockabilly Zombies - Sleepy Lagoon - Las Mujeres
page 5 - Flowerchild - Tara - The Wheel
page 6 - Tutelary Deity of Abortion







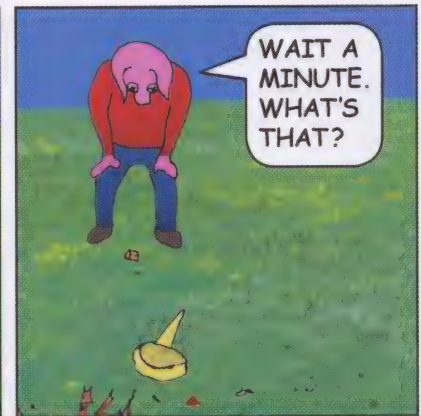
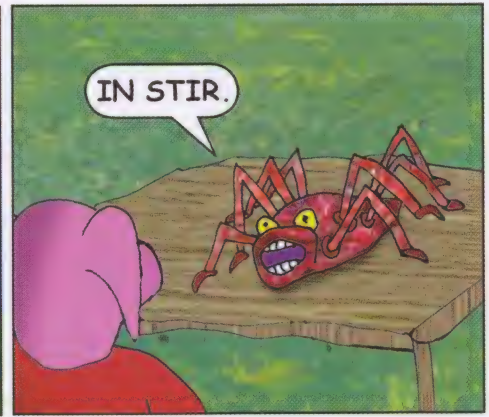
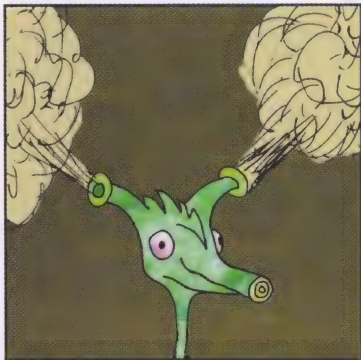
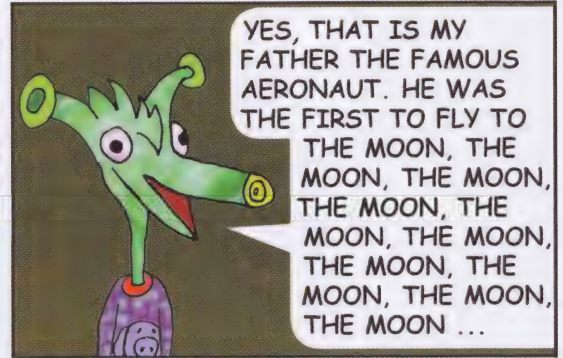
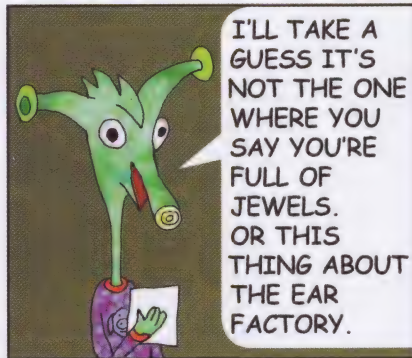
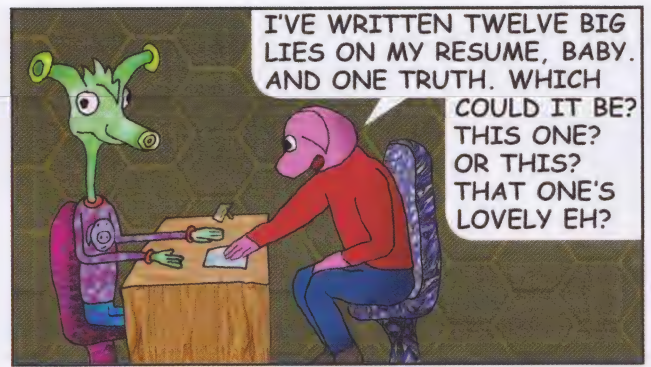


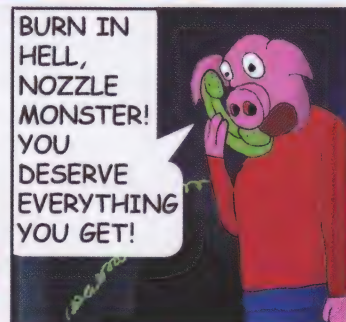
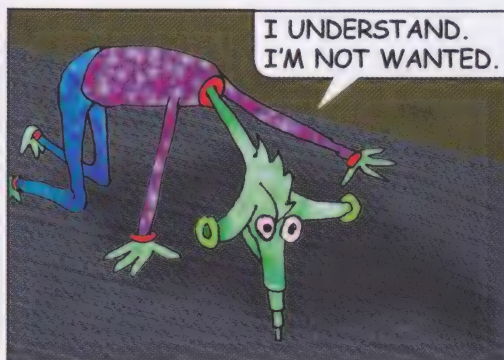
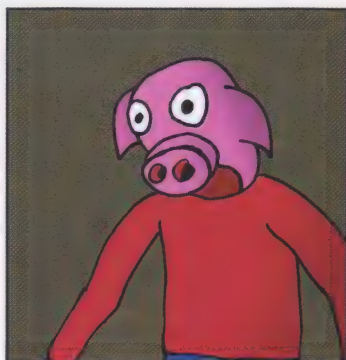
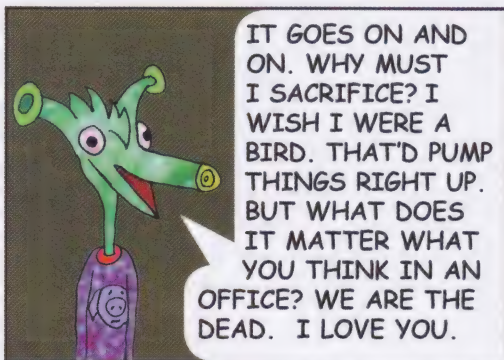
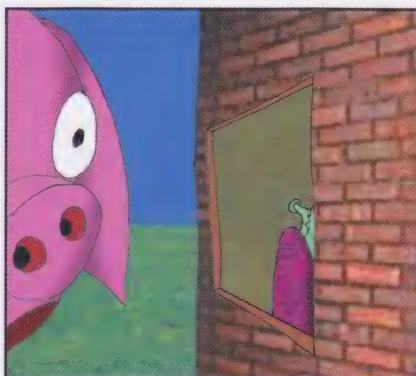
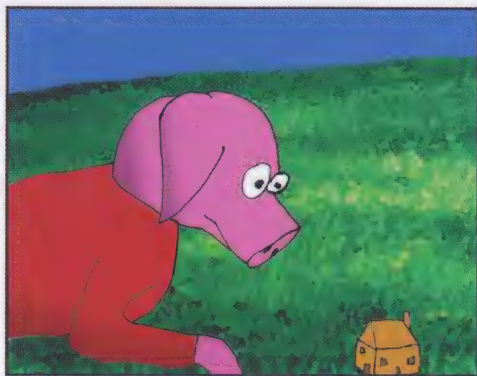


GET THAT THING AWAY FROM ME

AT THE JOB INTERVIEW

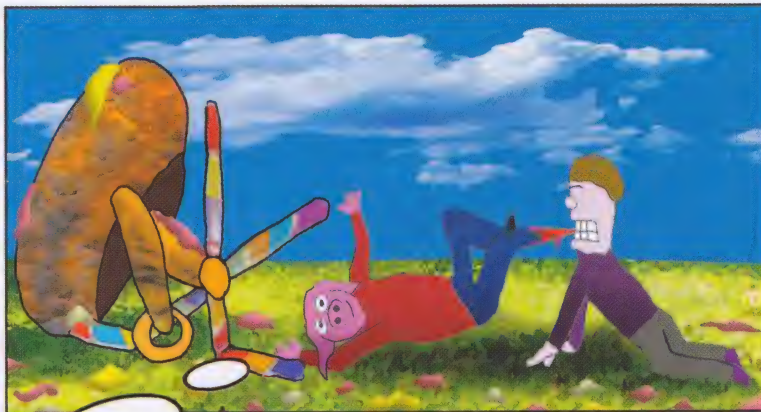
STEVE AYLETT





WHERE A NIGHT-
MARE IS STALLING,

WHEN A DREAM FAILS
TO GERMINATE,
I DECLARE YOU -



Blistering Back Issues!

Are you missing something from your life?
Some indefinable void, yearning to be filled?
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Eat To The Beat

By Wendi Jarrett

Super Salsas

I started making variations of salsa as an alternative accompaniment to the usual very rich coleslaw. The great thing about salsas is the fresh, enlivening flavours which both tantalise and cleanse the palate to a certain degree. You can also change the flavours to suit the rest of the menu or your personal taste or what's in season.

The basic Method for salsa making is similar to the best Caribbean cocktails ... something hot, something sweet, something sour, something long! So just chop, grate the ingredients small, mix well together and allow the flavours to mingle before serving.

CaribThai Twist

- 1 green mango - peeled and grated
- 1/2 scotch bonnet pepper - deseeded and chopped small
- 2 spring onions (scallion) - sliced diagonally
- 2 organic carrots - washed and grated small
- 1 tsp fresh root ginger - grated
- 1 large lime - juiced
- 1 tsp rapeseed oil
- 1 orange - peeled, deseeded and flesh chopped small

Indian Raita

- 1/2 cucumber - washed and chopped small
- Big handful of fresh coriander leaves - washed and chopped
- 1 dessert spoon of mango chutney
- 1/4 tsp ground black pepper
- 1/4 tsp cumin seed - lightly dry roasted
- Pinch of chilli powder
- 6 tbsp natural yoghurt

Michael's English Summer

- 2 cups of frozen peas
- 1 cucumber - washed (peeled if preferred) & cubed
- 1 tbsp mint sauce
- 1 tbsp rapeseed / olive oil
- 3 tbsp cider vinegar
- good grind of black pepper

Tomato & Bean Mix

- 4 ripe tomatoes - washed and chopped small
- 1 med red onion - chopped small
- 1 tsp fresh root ginger - grated finely
- 1 large lime - juiced
- 1 tin of beans (variety of choice - borlotti, or mixed salad beans in Mexican sauce)
- 1 tsp rapeseed oil

Spanakopita

I first tasted the lovely Greek dish at my friends Paul and Dundy in Cambridge, it was a great welcome for me from new friends; a vegetarian amongst a sea of flesh-eaters, everyone wolfed down this tasty dish! I've made the dish now for over twenty years and Spanakopita remains a popular dish for my own supper or lunch meals. It looks very impressive but is really easy to make and great value too. Spanakopita is also great eaten cold, packed up as part of a picnic or lunch box, just slice it into diamond shapes and serve with gorgeous garlicky tomatoes for a jewel of a meal.

1 kilo - fresh spinach - hand stems removed, washed and drained

1 medium onion - finely chopped

4 cloves of fresh garlic - crushed

120g - *Feta cheese - drained

Good grind of fresh black pepper

1/4 tsp nutmeg - finely grated (optional)

2 eggs

1 pkt Filo pastry (8 - 10 sheets)

4 tbsp oil or melted butter

* Cheese options:

Feta and stilton/ Mature cheddar

METHOD

In a large bowl, put the spinach, onion, garlic, eggs, seasonings and feta cheese; crumble and mix all the ingredients together well. Set aside.

Oil the ovenproof dish. Take the Filo pastry, open flat and brush the top sheet with oil/melted butter just before using. Do this each time. Lay the first couple of sheets to form a base on the bottom of the dish. (Use about 4-5 sheets). It's useful to allow some pastry to overhang the edges, so you can pull them over the top at the end.

Spread the spinach/cheese mixture over the Filo in the dish and cover with the remaining Filo pastry. Bring the sides up on top and arrange with scrunches and twists. Brush with butter and place on the middle shelf - Gas 4 for 20 minutes, then increase to Gas 6 for a further 10 minutes or until the pastry is golden brown.

Serve with:

Slices of ripe fresh organically grown tomatoes, basil and lemon and oil dressing

Garlicky tomatoes

Tomato and bean salad

Stitch This

Required Stuff...

Hot Water Bottle

Large Button,
Scraps of Braid,
Black Wool & A Bit
Of Pink Felt

Newspaper &
a Fat Marker Pen

Needle & Thread
+ Either A Sewing Machine or
Lots Of Time & a Steady Hand

Sharp Scissors

Handful Of Stuffing
(I Used a Bit Of an Old Quilt)

Half a Metre Of Thick
Horse-Colour Polar Fleece
(or if you have an old 100% wool
jumper you could felt it in the
washing machine - wash it at 60°
a couple of times till it matts).

FIRST MAKE YOUR PATTERN...

There are 3 parts to the basic cover (A-C)
2 parts for the nose (D&E) & 4 parts for the ears (F)

Lay your bottle onto the
newspaper and draw neatly
around it with the fat pen



Then use
this as a
guideline to
draw a
second line
15mm away
from the
edge, this
gives us
our seam
allowance.



Draw two of shape A, take the
second one and draw a
horizontal line half way up,
Cut along the line,
thus creating B&C!

Lay pieces B&C
onto the fabric
and using your
marker extend
the top edge of
C by about 5cm.

This will make
our overlap,
through which
to insert the
bottle. Cut the
three pieces out
along the
outside line.

Nose time. Get another piece of
newspaper and draw around the
bottle AGAIN (tis the last time).

Use this as a guide
to sketch out the
shape of the nose,
it needs to be a bit
longer than the
bottle.



Then add on
a 15mm seam
allowance as
before, cut
one out full
size (D) and a
second one
(E) about
half the
height.

Finally, cut 4
identical pieces for
the ears. These
need to be about
15cm high x 8cm on the
bottom edge
(this includes the seam).



ALRIGHT MY CRAFTY DROOGS?
I am getting hardcore on your
butts this month, pattern
cutting, clipping-corners...
SKILLS PEOPLE!

I think we are both ready for this.

We have accepted that Summer lasts
for two and a half weeks these
days and none of us can afford to
put the heating on...

Nor should we!

Eco-warriors choose a third
jumper, a group hug and of course
your favourite hot water bottle.
But how to keep warm and indulge
your penchant for perpetual film
referencing at the same time?

Here's how!

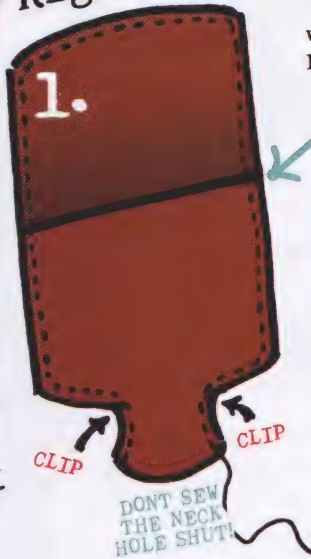
WITH OUR PATENTED GODFATHER
**HORSES HEAD
IN THE BED**

**HOT WATER
BOTTLE COVER**

MAKE THEM FOR YOUR ENEMIES

Confused? Good. Carry On...

Righto...

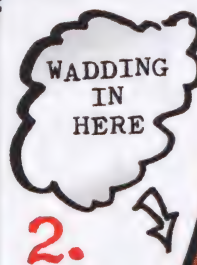


Put pieces A,B & C right sides together and sew around the whole lot with a 15mm. When you hit the part where the two back pieces overlap go over the stitches a couple of times to strengthen it. Don't forget to leave the neck open!

Next clip the corners as shown with sharp scissors so it lies flat when you turn the whole thing inside out.

Now try your hot water bottle in it to make sure it fits, better to find out now if it doesn't.

PHASE ONE COMPLETE



Take the nose pieces next (D&E) and sew them together right sides facing, clip the rounded edge and turn it right-side out.

Cut a piece of wadding to pad out the nose and shove it in there to make a nice fat horsey nose. Flip it over, this is the front.



Next hand-sew the nose into place using a Slip-stitch.

You will need to pad out your cover with some cardboard so you don't stitch through the whole thing.

CLIPPING

Is when you cut out a little wedge of fabric, so that when you turn your sewing the right way out the fabric doesn't buckle. Be careful to cut right up to the sewing line but not through it!



Ears next, take your 4 pieces and sew them face to face in pairs, turn and clip to make 2 ears.

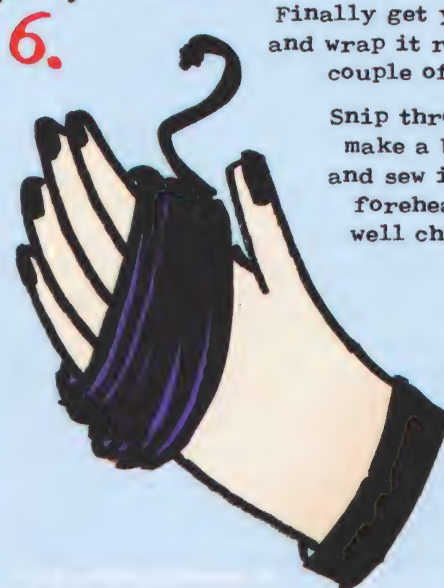
Fold each ear in half vertically and sew with a couple of firm hand-stitches.

Squash them flat and place them on the back of the head, poking up. Hand-sew the ears into place.



Fun Bit! Cut out a little pink lolling felt tongue, two fleece nostrils, two bits of braid about 4cm long to make the X eye and get out the button jar for the other one.

Play around with them till you are happy with your lovely horses' blank, dead face, then stitch them all in place.



Finally get your ball of wool and wrap it round your hand a couple of dozen times.

Snip through the lot to make a bunch of hair and sew it to the horses forehead with a few well chosen stitches.

That's it, off you go and get making. ONLY DONT TELL ME YOU CANT DO IT. BECAUSE IT INSULTS MY INTELLIGENCE. AND MAKES ME VERY ANGRY.

Fin.





The Spinning Doctors

Invest time in developing relationships

What are the "five fruits of well-being"? In 2008 the New Economics Foundation (NEF) reviewed the UK government's Foresight Project on Mental Capital and Well-Being to come up with five fruits of well-being. The question posed was: What are the five activities (things you can do) that if people carried them out would improve their sense of well-being?

The concept of well-being comprises two main elements: Feeling good and functioning well. Feelings of happiness, contentment, enjoyment, curiosity and engagement are characteristic of someone who has a positive experience of their life. Equally important for well-being is our functioning in the world. Experiencing positive relationships, having some control over your life and having a sense of purpose are all important attributes of well-being.

The five fruits they came up with were: Be active, connect with others, take notice, keep learning and give something back. Having previously discussed keeping active this article covers investing in relationships (connect with others).

"Connect with people around you, family, friends, colleagues and neighbours. Be this at home, school, work or in your local community. Think of these as the cornerstones of your life and invest time in developing them. Building these connections will support and enrich you every day."

<http://www.neweconomics.org/projects/five-ways-well-being>

The evidence emerging from the *Foresight Challenge Reports* indicates that social relationships are critical for promoting well-being and for acting as a buffer against mental ill health. This seems to be the case for people across all ages.

Another concept of the original research was mental capital. Mental capital is the ability we have to utilise our resources to enable our well-being. As with financial capital we may have an initial endowment from birth with deposits and withdrawals through life enabling us to have choice of lifestyle, with diminishing returns in later life. Pictorially this could be imagined as a manned rocket taking off with an initial power and trajectory, dodging the asteroids of difficulty (or not), being refuelled, with a final fall to earth. In this analogy relationships with others could be seen as episodes of refuelling as well as guidance to deal with the asteroids.

Trajectory

There is growing evidence of the importance of genetics in personality providing at least 50% of our happiness, increasing the importance of choosing parents carefully. The genetic seed planted in our mother's womb is already influenced by the environment it finds itself in e.g. maternal smoking, alcohol and dietary habits and stress hormones. The vulnerable child is crucially influenced by early attachment to parents, forming a template for how the child develops relationships with others, early patterns that can repeat in later life. Our ability to be dependent on others and trust others as well as control our own inner feelings and bodily actions is developed within these first few years of life. The brain is developing its executive functioning processes (this is the ability of the brain to organise and manage information, as well as develop control of our behaviour of initial impulsivity versus self-control).

Templates for lifelong learning, self-esteem and social engagement are also developing and being laid down, again these patterns of early life influence our later perceptions and behaviours including our ability to bond with others.

Investment from others

Friendships, mentors, teachers and role models through childhood either encourage or discourage further healthy development of templates / behaviours. At this sensitive time an abusive relationship, especially sexual abuse or bullying, cause damage to development of perception and trust in others. Defences that are used to protect the inner child may persist into later life and become inappropriate behaviour in adulthood. As a general practitioner I see many people who are stuck with chains from the past carrying around heavy burdens that weigh them down and prevent them from flourishing.

National surveys of psychiatric morbidity in adults aged 16-64 in Great Britain show that the most significant difference between a group of people with mental illness and those without is social participation. Furthermore, a primary social network (defined as the total number of close relatives and friends) of three or less predicts the probability of common mental health disorders (CMDs) in the future even when previous CMDs have been adjusted for.

An African saying that it takes a village to raise a child has more than a ring of truth to it. We still need this village in adulthood.

Personal choice

Developing independent lives, we choose our own relationships-we also choose how much to invest ourselves in these relationships. As we open up to others we receive feedback and learn from others of ourselves, our self perception is challenged or reinforced. Further abusive events reinforce negative self perception and low self-esteem. My experience as a GP which is backed up with evidence in research is that people who have had early childhood abuse tend to have more negative life events than those who did not. Most people who are able to develop some intimacy with others, attachment and interdependency can enable further growth and security and this seems to protect against mental illness.

Interestingly, opposites truly do seem to attract when it comes to personality, if you have one type of personality on Myers Briggs personality scale it is likely that your partner will have opposite preferences. It is almost as if you choose somebody who matches your weaknesses with their strengths therefore together you are stronger. Fortunately for men the evidence is that marriage does improve mental health. The evidence is not quite so strong for women!

The new economic foundation in their manifesto for well-being described the need to reclaim our time and focus on the things important to us. One of the best decisions I've made in my marriage was to have a regular date night with my wife which we've done now for over 20 years. One night of the week is ours and is protected so we can have space to be together.





Destination

The evidence cited within the *Foresight Challenge Reports* focuses mainly on the importance of social networks as a buffer against mental ill health. Research has also found that happy people have stronger social relationships than less happy people. While the causality of this effect may be difficult to determine, studies from social capital research suggest that social networks promote a sense of belonging and well-being. The 2005 British attitude survey shows that since 1989 there has been a continued increase in the number of people who prefer to spend more time with family and friends with less time at work. So perhaps the message of the importance of social relationships is actually changing behaviour and work-life balance. This is not to say that the workplace is bad for your mental health. Indeed, unless you are being bullied or there are health and safety issues, generally being at work improves mental health.

It may also be that we are being more aware not just of the importance of the number of social networks we have but also the importance for the depth in relationships. Having a breadth of superficial networks are important for our sense of position in our community. They provide feelings of connectedness, familiarity and self-worth. Having depth of relationships with a stronger bond will provide support, encouragement and meaning. Since the evidence that feeling close to and valued by others is a fundamental human need (see Nervi, issue 3) we need both breadth and depth in social relationships.

So how can we improve our social capital? A good investment rule is "Do unto others as you have done to yourself" or alternatively "Love your neighbour as you love yourself". This is the foundation of human rights and the ethic of reciprocity that enables individuals to form communities. Unfortunately human nature is not always to do what we want to do and as St Paul and many other eloquent writers have described, we have a divided mind. We act in a way we wish we didn't (more on this on a later article on lifelong learning). Being aware of what we're doing, consciously trying to love others as ourselves and giving time to relationships is likely to provide dividends.

I see many people not only chained by their own past traumas, but remaining chained to those who traumatised them. Breaking these chains with acceptance and forgiveness and letting go of the past can bring an immense sense of freedom as you now have energy for the present rather than dissipating your energy in the past. You may require talking therapies however issues often boil down to letting go of the past, once you have learned all you can from it and living in the present. Letting go of previous attachments enables you to form new attachments to others in the present.

Am I bothered

Despite living in crowded accommodation people can become isolated and socially excluded. Initially this may be due to family disagreement, however often mental illness or physical frailty prevent re-engagement with others including returning to the workplace. Two examples of this are: A patient commenting that "as his GP of 15 years I was the person he had had the longest relationship with"; Secondly when I apologised for ringing a wrong number the elderly lady who answered said "Don't go you are the first person I have spoken to in five days".

A local project in Spring Borough in Northampton to try to reverse this social isolation was called "Am I Bothered". This project was led by a local policeman, mental health nurse and housing officer as part of a trailblazer program locally. Small cards were produced with a telephone number for neighbours to ring if they had not seen one of their vulnerable neighbours recently. One of the team would then make contact and just check that the neighbour was all right. This has proved a popular project and one of my patients commented she was much more willing to be involved with her neighbours knowing that there were others who she could call on for help when needed.

5 Hugs A Day

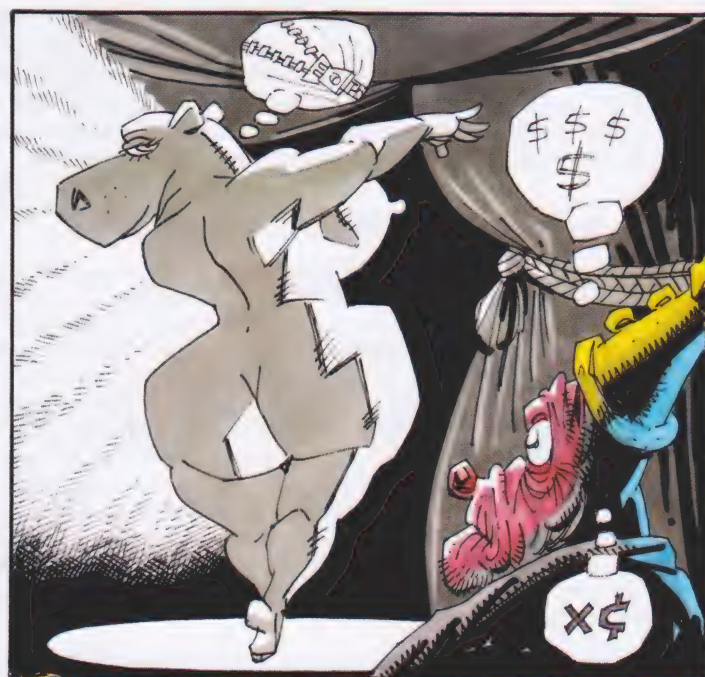
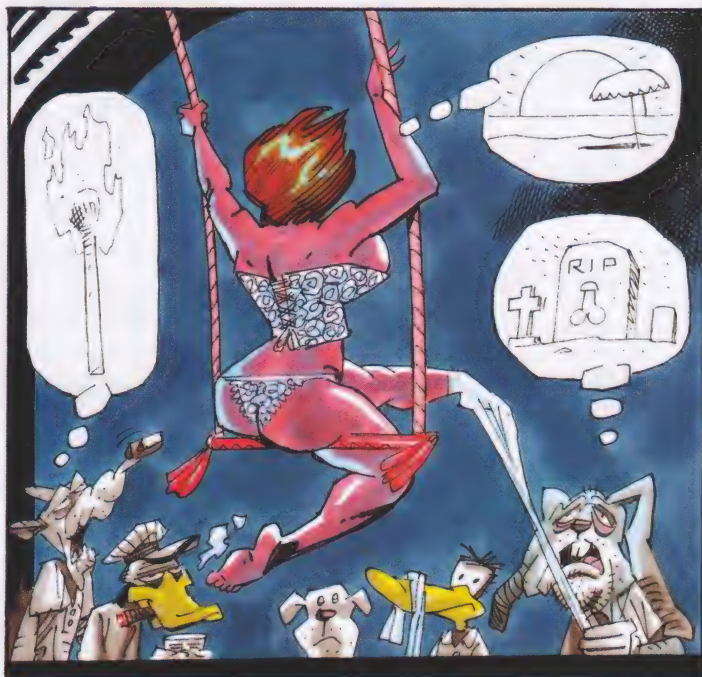
Another project that builds on our human need for physical contact was "Five Hugs a Day". Part of attachment theory is our need for touch and the idea that this is not just essential for children but also for adults. It has suggested we need four hugs for maintenance and more for growth. Perhaps a passing fad but it was strange yet uplifting for me to go to a well-being conference and be greeted by people in T-shirts offering hugs. You never know it might develop in Northampton.

The End in Mind

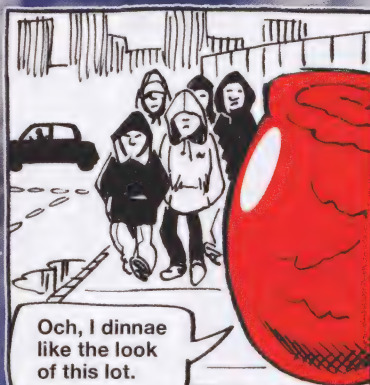
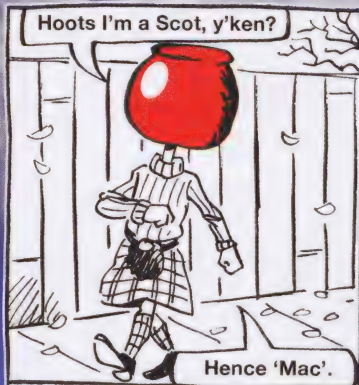
I have yet to meet any patient who on their gravestone would like to have carved "I wish I'd spent more time at the office", however I know many who wished they had chosen to spend more time with their children and partners. If we supported families with young children more effectively whilst still recognising the value of our elderly population who have so much to give, we could maximise our collective mental capital. Genetically we seem programmed to increase our area of influence (in modern day this may equate to affluence) rather than developing our well being. Keeping our genetic drives under control and making time and space to both strengthen and broaden social networks is a healthy investment that will pay good dividends.

Dr Feelgood tips on increasing social capital

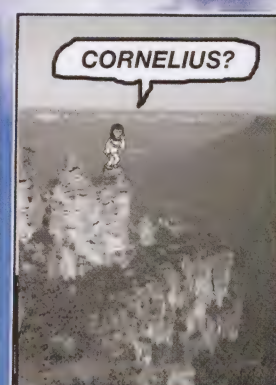
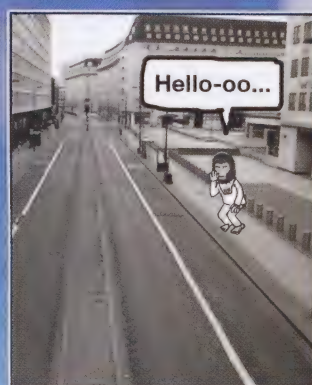
1. Reclaim your time to focus on important relationships.
2. Love your neighbour as yourself.
3. Focus your life goals with a commitment to family, friends, social and political involvement rather than career success and material gains.
4. Awareness of past patterns that may not be helpful now. Let go of the past to live in the present. Change can happen.
5. Grow the breadth of your community networks and the depth of a few supportive relationships.



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The Eco Chamber

Sick Society

By Dave Hamilton

I've been to India twice, I'm a vegetarian, I dropped out of school and took psychedelics. At the time of writing my hair was long (it may still be when you read this). I talk about the good old days of Glastonbury festival and I've hitched around the country doing hair-wraps. All this can only really point to one thing: I'm a big old stinkin' hippy!

As a card carrying hippy people often see the way I look and assume that I think in a certain way. They often assume I am very passionate about the environment, I believe in an end to violent conflict and I don't eat meat for ethical reasons. I quite happily let people have these assumptions, as these are all subjects I am quite unwavering on.

However the longer I hang around hippies the more I realise something isn't quite right. Alongside the liberal thinking, there is a really strong belief in what can only be described as bullshit.

I don't think it is the fault of the individual. It seems to me that it emanates from misguided or story hungry journalists and clever marketeers. They are there to sell us a concept or a product.

One of the main concepts these journalists and marketeers like to convince us of is that we are in some way ill. If we are ill, we need to be cured, and if we need to be cured they can miraculously provide us with the cure we need. A lot of the time the only illness present is a loss of self-esteem after a relationship break up or loss of employment. Vulnerable people can, justifiably crave sympathy and attention; someone to listen to them and tell them it will all be okay. And in a fairer, more caring society they would get that attention. Disappointingly though, in our society quite often the only people willing to listen are people wishing to exploit that vulnerability.

Recently one of the clever ways these marketeers have convinced us we are ill is by making us believe we are ingesting toxic compounds and we have to eliminate them. This is not a new practice. Daffy's elixir, a well known product of the 18th and 19th centuries, was marketed as having a "highly fortifying nature against any noxious humour". Nowadays the language has changed but we still find ourselves buying into products to aid the 'detoxification process'. Detox teas, patches, herbs, pills and diet books are all the range and all come at a price.

One such product, the Detox foot pad, aims to 'Detox while you sleep' by eliminating "unnecessary waste matter in the body through the feet." One of the magic ingredients in these pads is the tree sap of the Japanese Medlar. This, amongst other things, is said to draw toxins out through the feet. Now I get rid of a big lump of toxins every morning at around 8.30am and it's not through my feet. If I ever find these toxins build up, I might have a high fibre cereal (yes, wheat cereal!!) then it's not usually long before I'm eliminating toxins at the same time every morning. Our bodies have been getting rid of toxic compounds in this way all our lives. We have a liver and a pair of kidneys which constantly eliminate toxins from our body.

As much as we'd like there to be, there is no panacea to a crap diet and no exercise. It's much easier to rely on a snake oil pedlar to sell us an antidote to hard living rather than make any decent lifestyle changes. The appeal in this is obvious, drink what you like, eat what you like wash it down with a wheatgrass juice and a spirulina tablet and you're insides will be as rejuvenated as a spring lamb.

Still, I'm not here to promote the virtues of a temperate lifestyle. What I find a real danger is that some of the products sold to us can actually do more harm than good. Let's go back to the foot patches. Amongst the so-called beneficial ingredients of these patches is a cyanide containing compound called vitamin B17 or amygdalin. One study claims "the hazards of amygdalin therapy were evidenced in several patients by symptoms of cyanide toxicity or by blood cyanide levels approaching the lethal range". In short, people who take this 'vitamin' were poisoning themselves. Thankfully the foot patches are applied externally but it really does beg the question, why have it there in the first place? Surely a sock full of pixie dust or sprinkling glitter over an eyebrow would do just as much good?



Maskinstue - arrangement

plan, snit

KONSERVESEABRIK

Well the trick is to use just enough science to baffle and mystify without going into so much detail it becomes obvious bullshit. A genius of using science to sell is one 'Professor' Patrick Holford. I first came across 'Prof' Patrick Holford through his book 'The Optimum Nutrition Bible'. I was given it during the first year of my Nutrition degree and after being marked down in an essay for referencing him it became apparent that he's not too well liked in academic nutrition circles.

So when Mr Holford came to my University, I thought I should see for myself what he was all about. During Patrick's lecture (which I had to buy a ticket for) he talked about the benefits of certain supplements and of course sold them in the break. This seems to be a regular theme with Holford and goes back to my earlier point about inventing an illness and selling the cure. Throughout my degree I was told that supplements were unnecessary for the majority of the population. Vegans and pregnant women were amongst the only people mentioned who would ever benefit from taking them. Taking a multivitamin isn't going to hurt you, if you've been taking one for years and you've got a clean bill of health fine. However Mr Holford advocates very high doses of vitamins especially his own Daffy's elixir – Vitamin C. Vitamin C is one of those vitamins you do need to include in the diet as the body doesn't make it. But it is also water soluble so too much of it simply gets pissed out if you don't use it and conversely if you take too high a dose you will reach bowel tolerance and it will come out round the other side.

Mr Holford recommends the use of vitamin C tablets with doses close to, if not higher, than bowel tolerance. His reason for this is that he believes Gorillas eat the equivalent of 66 oranges a day in vitamin C and we are a third the size of gorillas so we should eat the equivalent of 22 oranges a day. This equates to 1000mg or 1 gram of pure vitamin C and not surprisingly it is the limit anyone can take in a day without getting diarrhoea. If you've ever seen footage of a lowland gorilla then you'll notice they sit in swamps constantly munching on shoots and roots. If we were to approach a gorilla's diet we would have to eat 20 pounds (9.1 kg) per day of raw fruit and vegetables just to reach our calorie requirement. That's roughly the equivalent weight of 121 carrots every day and a good argument of why raw food diets are not always practical. His argument is that a vitamin pill is more convenient than eating that much food. Well, he's right but there are a few things he's neglecting. Firstly with 9.1 kilos of food come a lot of other micro and macro nutrients – (iron, zinc, beta-carotene etc etc). Also the body can deal with vitamins and minerals in a form it has evolved to digest it – as food. At levels of around 4-64mg, typical of food sources, up to 98% of vitamin C can be absorbed, in higher doses this begins to drop.

The second thing he is neglecting to mention is that the gorilla only eats such a huge amount of vitamin C in an effort to meet their daily calorie requirements. It's really incidental that they have so much vitamin C. Again our bodies only use what they need and eliminate the rest through urine. We don't need to eat such bulk as we can cook our food – it is even thought this is how we evolved to have larger brains. Once food is cooked it is easier to digest and less energy is needed to digest it. Consider eating a raw or cooked carrot. The raw carrot is hard, takes time to chew and then the stomach has to break down its tough outer skin. Now think of a soft cooked carrot – a couple of chews and it's gone.



Fast forward a few years and 'Prof' Holford is still around and still recommending high doses of vitamin C as a cure for everything from the common cold to AIDS. He's since come under scrutiny in Doctor and Guardian columnist's, Ben Goldacre's book 'Bad Science' and the website holdfordwatch.info. I've found a good question to ask when presented with any new information is 'Who funded this research?' or 'What will this person gain by telling me this?' If an article appears bestowing the virtues of chocolate and it cites a study by a confectionery multi-national then you know something may be up. Similarly if an article recommends you take a daily supplement of a brand with their face on the bottle or a diet found only in their latest book, then you know there may be a whiff of rodent in the air.

During World War II the shops in blitz torn London did not sell sharks cartilage powder or kudzu root powder yet UK residents were the healthiest they have ever been. This was largely due to the rationing of food resulting in reduced fat, salt and sugar intake combined with eating less meat and more fresh fruit and vegetables.

So perhaps the hardest thing to swallow may not be an overpriced supplement but the fact that maybe, just maybe most of us are actually well.

Illustrations by Ellie Mains

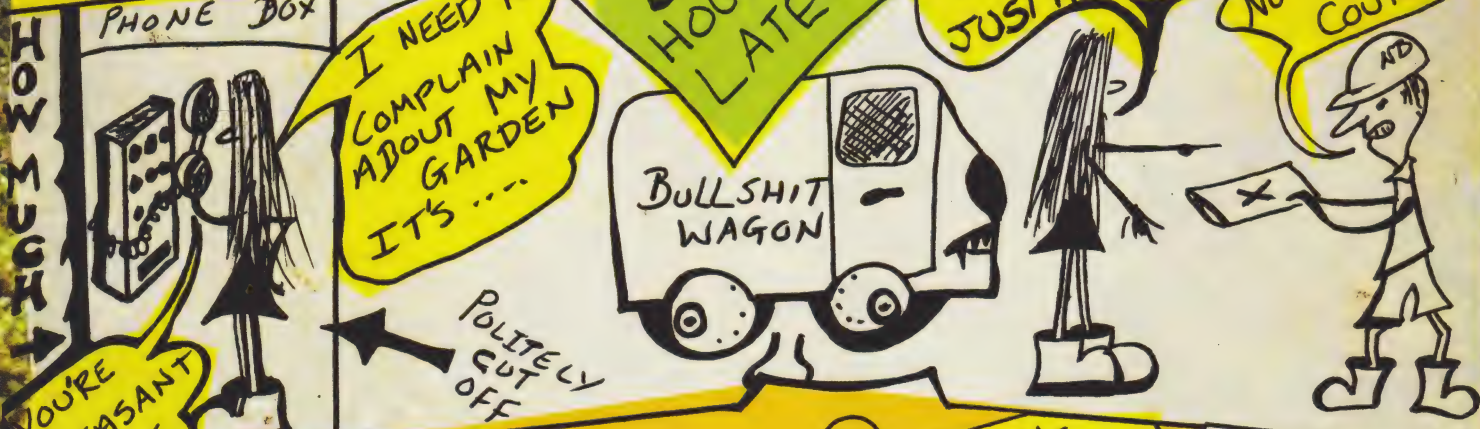


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TRUE STORY



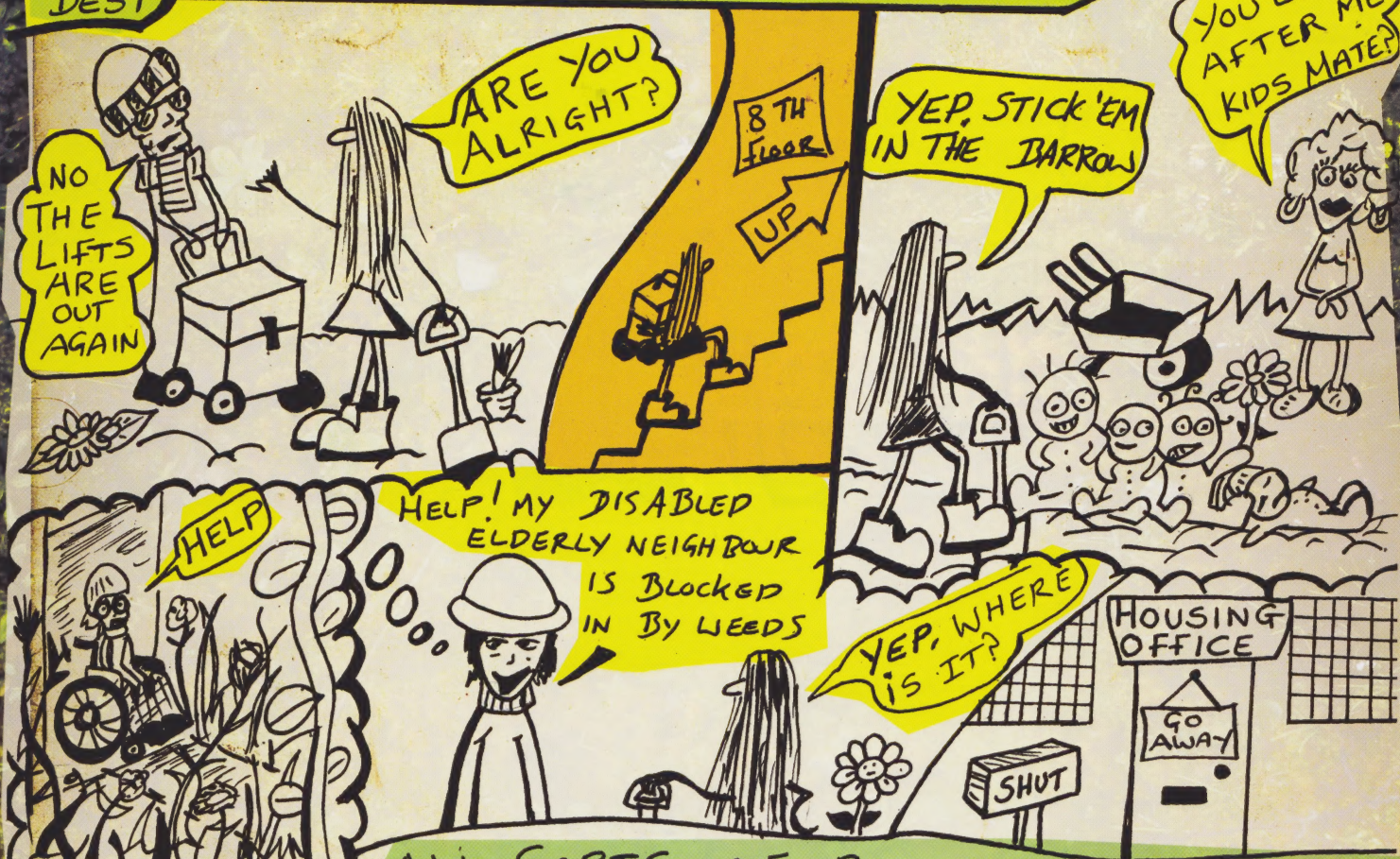
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Alex Musson

Web designer by day, comedy mag writer by night. Mustard is photocopied in front of a live studio audience.

www.mustardmag.org/alex

Alex Novak

Record shop owner and DJ.

myspace.com/spiralarchiverecords.com

TALES FROM NOGRAPHIC OCEAN TAKE A DIP... PART 2 BY ALEX NOVAK

Andrew Waugh

Illustrator on Mustard Pages likes to write things and draw funny pictures - some of these can be seen at

thismeanswaugh.blogspot.com

Barney Farmer / Lee Healey

Writer barneyfarmer@hotmail.com and cartoonist Lee Healey leehealey@btinternet.com have worked together forever, in that time contributing to publications including Viz, Maxim and the one in your hands.

Claire Ashby

I do gardening, art work, chewing gum and kick ass. Hate politicians and red tape. I like being outside.

Calluz

loves chrome and colour.

Dave Hamilton

Co-author of the Self sufficientish Bible and selfsufficientish.com. He also works as a freelance writer and runs wild food/foraging courses.

Contact: dave@selfsufficientish.com

David Quantick

David Quantick first worked with Savage Pencil at the NME. Since then he has written television comedy (Brass Eye, TV Burp.), radio shows (One, The Beggars' Guide) and, most importantly, is the voice of Channel Four's Coach Trip.

Deborah Delano

Debbie Delano, teacher, 51, enjoys corrupting the minds of the young and hill walking.

Dick Foreman

Dick Foreman recommends websites 'Marmalade Skies' & 'Key-Z Productions' for more stuff that couldn't be squeezed into 'Proof!' Dick lives in a secluded South Wales semi, which he is furtively transforming into a psychedelic shrine. After his death, the property will be administered by the National Trust. The price of admission will be your mind.

Ellie Mains

Ellie Mains was roped into illustrate for Dave Hamilton's articles. Although this is her first ever commission, she has rather enjoyed it and would be willing to do it again.

Contact Eleanor.mains@gmail.com

Gary Mills

Artist, writer, runner & ghost.

www.radonbrainstorm.blogspot.com

Gary Ingham

Writer of Blank Stares and Cricket claps fanzine, and chief hassle stirrer of Broken Shackle Tabernacle live music promotions of Northampton. Gary was awarded a certificate for completing the 25 meters front crawl in 1986.

www.myspace.com/brokenshackle

Hoax

Creative team behind Dodgem Logic

www.thisishoax.com

Joe Brown

Not that one. Pleasing photographic, typographic and pictorial contrivances on request - a Joe of all trades. Also musician + beard owner.

Twitter: [@joestupidstupid](https://twitter.com/joestupidstupid)

John Coulthart

John Coulthart enjoys the way the peacock is common to the arts of alchemy, fin de siècle Decadence and psychedelia. He lives in Manchester where he spends his time crafting elaborate justifications for his obsessions whilst working as a graphic designer.

Joshua Ryan (AKA The Storyteller)

Guitarist/keyboardist from The Retro Spankees and Guitarist/Stylophonist from 72% Morrissey. Josh performs, promotes, writes and generally causes mischief around Northampton whenever he can. info@wizbitmusic.com

Kevin O'Neill

Stone Age comic book artist, who refuses to be dragged beyond the 19th century. Kevin has ink in his veins and dyslexia explains him having the worlds largest collection of corn.

Melinda Gebbie

Former underground cartoonist, professional pomographer, author, sculptress, lecturer and illustrator of Lost Girls [Written by Alan Moore]. Melinda now resides in Northampton for her sins.

Martin Marprelate

Up from the depths, fifty storeys high, breathing fire, his head in the sky: Martin Marprelate! Martin Marprelate! Martin Marprelate...and Godzu-ki!

Margaret Killjoy

Margaret Killjoy is an itinerant and adventurer who contributes regularly to SteamPunk Magazine and Strangers In A Tangled Wilderness. They have a blog:

www.birdsbeforhestrom.net

Norman Adams

A one-man coalition between rage and reason, you're never more than three feet away from him in any given urban environment.

Robin Ince

My fingers are made of 1000 penguin paperback papercuts.

Simon Cooper

Illustrator, GSOH, 21ish, honest reliable, short, hairy, likes drawing and colouring in.

www.cooperillo.com

Savage Pencil

www.savagepencil.com

Email savx@savlab.demon.co.uk

Steve Moore

Steve Moore is an old loony who used to write comic books. Now thankfully, he writes what he likes.

Steve Aylett

Steve Aylett has written books such as LINT, Slaughtermatic and The Inflatable Volunteer, as well as comics like The Caterer and Get That Thing Away From Me.

www.steveaylett.com

Tamsyn Payne

50% CRAFTS, 40% CAKE, 10% MISCELLANEOUS... all woman...ish.

Wendi Jarrett

Wendi's food for health activities supports a range of local communities and their "getting to grips with food". She encourages sharing, teaching and learning.

Contact her on 07749873187 or email wendi4news@hotmail.co.uk

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